

The MIDLAND

Vol. XVIII

July 1931

No. 3

CAPONE, THE NEW AMERICAN MYTH

By TED OLSON

"New York is not America," an eminent Englishman takes pains to warn readers in the title of his book on Manhattan mores. For the last six months, in five different countries, including the Scandinavian, I have been repeating doggedly the contention that Chicago is not America and that Al Capone is not Chicago. And to very little purpose. An international myth, nourished by every resource of the films, the stage, the press, is not to be dissipated by a few feeble alien voices lifted in frantic protest.

The world today is supremely Chicago-conscious. And, what amounts to the same thing, Capone-conscious. There can be little doubt that the scar-faced gangster is at the moment our most eminent citizen. The names of Ford, Edison, Hoover, and Lindbergh still have a certain potency, to be sure. But none of them appears in newspaper headlines more than once to Capone's five. None of them can kindle that same fanatic fire in the European eye, unleash a similar torrent of earnest interrogation on the bewildered American.

The reason is not far to seek. Capone is more than a man. He is a legend, a symbol. He is the exemplification of all the vice and vulgarity and violence which Europe—perhaps only in self-defense—chooses to attribute to our upstart civilization. And more than anything else he is Chicago.

The average European may have a somewhat vague conception of the map of America. But he knows about Chicago—or at least thinks that he does. It is the point of reference for every attempt to orient oneself, whether geographically or culturally. When the American visitor sets foot on foreign soil the first question he hears is no longer "Are you from New York?" but "Are you

from Chicago?" And the second is almost sure to be "Tell me about this Al Capone."

The query is propounded with a species of horrified fascination. "He is a terrible man," your inquisitor will remark, with dolefully wagging head, and his implication is that it must be a terrible country that can tolerate such monstrosity. But nevertheless he wants to know all about the monstrosity. And quite likely you discover that he is able to tell you several things you did not know yourself. Despite our crime commissions and investigations, our incessant viewing with alarm in magazine and pulpit, our headlines in 96-point Gothic, we are actually not nearly so preoccupied with the phenomenon of gangsterism as is Europe.

Perhaps that is to our discredit rather than the contrary. Our indifference may merely indicate that we have become calloused. When Jack "Legs" Diamond collects a new cargo of smoking lead we yawn and dismiss it with a paragraph or two. European newspapers explode into scare-heads. Daily bulletins keep a journalistic finger on the Diamond pulse as devoutly as if he were a dying pontiff. Day after day, at the little Cornish *pension* where I was staying last November, my English fellow-guests seized the morning papers and turned eagerly to the current chronicle of Mr. Diamond's condition—afterwards plying me with inexhaustible questions concerning American gangsterism. As I write this now—in early May—all Norway is deeply concerned over the latest Diamond imbroglio. *Tidens Tegn* this morning had two-thirds of a column about him.

Mr. Diamond is—or was—I believe, an ornament of New York rather than of Chicago. But that does not matter to the European press or its public. Chicago remains the point of reference.

Oslo *Aftenavis* reported his current misfortune under the caption "Attempt on Capone's Lieutenant," and justified it by attaching to the cable account a paragraph of identification: "The reason why Jack Diamond is in constant peril of death is the fact that he has quarreled with Al Capone, whose lieutenant he used to be. It would seem that he has good cause to be worried!"

The ramifications of inter-gang alliances and feuds are all too complex to permit me to say whether *Aftenavis* was correct in its deduction. The significant thing is that it felt this commentary was necessary. A gang shooting had to be related somehow or other to Chicago and Capone; otherwise it would be incomprehensible to the Norwegian reader.

Chicago. In Europe it is a magic and a sinister name. It has something of the same potency that the words "sex" and "passion" have in Hollywood and in the editorial rooms of tabloids. In a headline it sells newspapers; on the hoardings outside a cinema theatre it drags in capacity crowds. Charles Francis Coe's "Me—Gangster" was retitled "In the Shadow of Chicago" for Scandinavian consumption. Another film rechristened "Chicago Bandits" is playing in Oslo as I write this. Edgar Wallace's "On the Spot" is featured in every bookshop window, and the play was showing simultaneously last winter in Chicago, New York, London, and Berlin. The advertisements never neglect to explain to the few who may need enlightenment that it is a drama of the Chicago underworld.

I have yet to discover in the Norwegian press a line about New York's municipal scandals. But the Chicago election which unseated William Hale Thompson received columns. The Thompson portrait appeared side by side with the puffy visage of Mr. Capone. For of course there was the inevitable tie-up with the Capone legend. "Big Bill" was represented simply as a henchman of the mighty Al, a puppet who danced when Capone pulled the strings. The new mayor, Anton J. Cermak, was hailed as a twentieth century Perseus whom a long-suffering citizenry had summoned to slay the dragon and unchain their Andromeda city.

I sat in an Oslo *pensionat* the other day talking with a woman whose home is in Chicago. At the sound of the magic word a sedate elderly Norseman, deep in his *Aftenposten*, visibly pricked up his ears. The proceedings of the Storting had obviously lost interest. He listened more and more

frankly, and finally leaned over and introduced himself into the conversation.

"Tell me," he said, "are there really so many bandits in Chicago?"

My Chicago acquaintance lifted eloquent eyebrows, and I nodded my understanding.

"Do you," I asked her, "hear that question everywhere you go?"

"I do," she assured me. "That, and also 'Do you know Al Capone?' and 'How do you pronounce his name?' and 'Why don't you put him in jail?' and 'They shoot people down with machine-guns right in the streets, don't they?'"

One would think that crime was something which America had invented, like corn flakes and the Ford automobile and tree-sitting contests. Or at least — since Europe likes to contend that we never really originate anything, but merely appropriate and commercialize the discoveries of impecunious European genius — at least we have perfected the technic of crime and put it into mass production.

"A real American 'holdup' drama," reports *Aftenposten*, "was played at the Porsgrunn railroad station last night." The bandit, it appeared, had been armed with two revolvers, and the imaginative reporter deduced that he had been inspired by an American movie, showing in Porsgrunn at the time, in which a similar robbery was perpetrated.

That deduction, however gratuitous, helps to place the blame. Gangster films provide a fairly large percentage of the Hollywood output, and the American film continues to be one of our most universal exports. Gangster stories fill our magazines and new organs are created to accommodate them. "On the Spot" is only the latest of a long list of underworld plays. It is small wonder that the echoes of our turpitude have blown across the Atlantic to ears always attuned to discord in the arrogant young world to the westward. The only remarkable thing is that distance in this case seems to magnify the din rather than to diminish it.

The fact is, I suppose, that Europe has to have an American legend. The average mind cannot comprehend a continent — least of all a continent so immense, so variegated as ours, a world in which every paradox can be true. America. Like Russia, or Africa, or China, it is too big to grasp. Some simplification is inevitable; some symbol must be found to interpret the whole. It is our misfortune, and in a measure our own fault, that lawlessness has come to be accepted by a large part

of the world as the typical American characteristic, and that Chicago has been able to provide the perfect symbol in the person of Mr. Capone.

For a long time the cowboy-Indian myth served very well as a handy thumbnail summary of the North American continent. But that legend had begun to seem a little naive even to the credulous Briton. Now appears a new one, quite as colorful and barbaric, and having the added merit of being somewhat nearer the truth. Al Capone, his henchmen and his foes, levying tribute on rich and poor alike, trafficking in million-dollar rum cargoes, terrorizing whole cities, sending miniature armies into battle with machine-guns and armored cars, are the logical successors in folk mythology of Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull.

Some early expert in the psychology of advertising remarked that he didn't care what people said about him so long as they said something. From that thesis the itinerant American must derive what consolation he can. For he soon learns that attempts at refutation are hopeless. Again and again I expostulate with my Norse acquaintances, as I have expostulated with others in England, in Holland, in Germany, in Denmark. Always I am met with the same patient challenge: "But it's *true*, isn't it?" And when I am constrained to admit that the counts in the indictment are for the most part founded on fact, they nod triumphantly.

It is futile to protest that a picture may be true in detail and yet be incomplete. It is futile to remind them that Chicago is a city whose population exceeds that of the entire country of Norway, and that within that crowded cosmos of more than three million inhabitants it is possible for many conflicting truths to exist side by side. It is futile to point out that an immense heterogeneous industrial community, a conglomerate of every race on earth, uprooted, unassimilated, only partly articulate, must have problems of organization and discipline which never harass a homogeneous nation with a culture still fundamentally agrarian and maritime. I say all this, and it is so much wasted breath. I meet no comprehension, only a politely veiled scepticism. Legend has always mocked at logic; the blade slits empty air and the adversary smiles back unscathed.

Nevertheless, I cannot quite reconcile myself to having Al Capone accepted as the type-American. I do not even like to have him appear in the oral thesaurus of the eastern hemisphere as a synonym for Chicago. My own acquaintance with Chicago has been limited, but the impression I carried away was not one of squalor and iniquity. Rather there was beauty — a new arrogant beauty of taut lines and brawny masses, of shining steel and glass and winged stone. There was power, not yet quite broken to rein and spur, perhaps, but invigorating, indomitable. There was youth, cruel and insolent as youth frequently is, but somehow splendid. The wind from the lake was a shout and a challenge. The tides of traffic on Michigan Avenue had something of the effortless energy of the Gulf Stream.

That, I think, is more truly Chicago than Al Capone. And if I could make Europe see that Chicago, I should not be so ashamed to have it stand as the symbol of America. It would be incomplete, of course; America is much too large to be comprehended in a single myth. It would ignore the America which I myself know best and love most. But it would, I am convinced, be nearer the reality than the present distorted apotheosis of a bootlegger and his hired assassins.

But I suppose it is hopeless to attempt a substitution. The Chicago that I see is not simple; it is not so crudely dramatic; it cannot be personified in a face and a name, like the face and name of Al Capone. A magical name, that! Terse, sonorous, dynamic. Not even Dickens could have invented a better one — nor the highest-salaried copy-writer in our most expert advertising agency.

Eventually, no doubt, I shall grow weary of the argument. It is a thankless task trying to convert a hemisphere. Europe will continue to believe what it chooses of America, and it will rarely choose to believe anything good. One might better reconcile oneself to the inevitable.

I think that the next time a new acquaintance kindles with that familiar blend of horror and fascination, and coos: "Oh, you're an American? Are you from Chicago? Do you know Al Capone?" I shall reply:

"Oh, sure. Al and me's buddies. Would you like to see my machine-gun?"

PRODIGAL

BY LEILA SHELLEY

It was warm and clean in the hay-loft. The boy asleep in the hay began to wake up, but slowly and unwillingly, because it had been a good sleep. For a minute he did not open his eyes. He lay still, smelling the clean grassy smell and feeling the deep springs of the hay beneath his body. Half dreaming, he let himself believe that he was lying on the straw bed in his room at the old farm, and that in a moment he would hear his mother's voice downstairs and catch the odor of bacon frying for breakfast. Or pan-cakes, if it were Sunday.

It might be Sunday, he thought, and jerked awake at the thought. He had lost count of the days of the week; it might be Sunday, and he didn't know it. It gave him a sense of his own terrible abandonment, his isolation from all things human. That a man could pass unnoticed through the significant atmosphere of a Saturday, could experience without recognition the benison of a Sunday morning — it was beyond belief. Even Robinson Crusoe was not so bereft.

The boy sat up and began to comb his hair with a stub of a comb. Timothy seed stuck in the teeth of the comb and fell in a shower on the shoulders of his dusty blue coat. He spat the dust of the hay-loft out of his mouth and wished for a drink of water. He listened: there was no one about in the farm-yard. He could go down and find the well and get a drink and a dash of water in his face.

He sat still at the top of the ladder, listening intently to the little sounds of the strange barn. The hens were about, and some half-grown chickens were crying to be let out of their coop. Just beneath him, at one side of the barn, he could hear the grunting of a litter of young pigs.

He hesitated, hating to appear, to run the gantlet of the unfamiliar farm-yard. It was milking time, feeding time; at any moment the farmer would come out and the deserted horse lot would become an enemy camp. While he hesitated the babyish whining of the little pigs became an uproar, the chickens increased their shrill racket, and the horses offered friendly whinnies. The moment had passed; the farmer was coming.

The boy crawled back into the dusky mound of hay, feeling his way into the darkness beyond the ladder. He would wait till the feeding was done,

watch when the farmer had gone to milk, and slip away unnoticed. There would be an abandoned place somewhere down the road where he could find water, or he would gather his courage and ask some woman for a drink of milk and maybe something to eat. He could offer to chop some wood. . . .

Without warning, as he lay quiet as a 'possum, the floor in front of him parted in a trap door. A beam grazed his head, and the hay about him slid smoothly down the mow. The boy rode down like a bather on a big wave, and alighted on his knees at the farmer's feet.

The farmer dropped his pitchfork and stood dumb with astonishment. "What the hell!" he said after a moment. "What the — where the douse did you come from?"

The boy stood up, but he could not summon his voice to answer. A sharp fall wind blew in through the open door, and he began to tremble with cold and fright.

"I've had about enough of you tramps sleepin' in my hay," the old man said. He picked up the hay fork and began to pitch hay to the horses with short, angry motions. "Smokin' cigarettes and loungin' around on the hay till the horses won't touch it. I got a good notion to turn you over to the sheriff. What's your name?"

"Charlie Bass," said the boy. He threw back his head as he gave his name; he had a mind to talk back to the farmer.

"How old are you?"

"Seventeen."

"A pretty way to spend your time, at your age. Why ain't you at work, or in school?"

"I been at work," Charlie answered defiantly. "Harvestin' corn and pickin' apples and anything they was. I'm lookin' for work now."

"Well, you came to a pore place." The farmer finished feeding the horses and paused a moment, looking the boy over. "And you better not let my wife see you, for God, how she hates a tramp. You ain't had any breakfast, have you?"

"No sir."

"Have you got any money?"

"No."

"Well, listen, I got no time to parley, but I'll tell you what. See that pan over there by the

manger — I brought it down for the shoats, but it's clean. It's skim milk with biscuits broke up in it. Take what you want of it, and dump the rest in the hog trough. And then get out."

The farmer went to his milking, closing the door after him. With the draft shut out the barn was warm and dark, full of the good smell of horses and the sound of their teeth on the corn cobs. Charlie took the pan of bread and milk and hoisted himself up on an empty manger to eat it. He held the wide tin dish-pan clumsily in his lap and ate from it with the old iron mixing spoon that the farmer had stirred the mess with. The brown crusts were soaked with thin milk that had turned slightly sour; because the pigs were young and the morning cold the farmer had set the pan at the back of the kitchen stove and heated it lukewarm. Charlie could see the stove, with the pan standing at the end over the reservoir, while the front lids grew rosy with the morning fire and the farmer's wife turned the damper and put the fresh biscuits in the oven. Good thing breakfast was not over, for sure as fate the woman would have scraped the plates into the pigs' pan.

He knew it all so well, the kitchen, the red-lidded stove, the pan of warm mash for the shoats: was it not all the same at this moment in his mother's house? In that other kitchen his mother was standing over the stove getting breakfast; his father was washing up at the sink. Dad would be contending that Janey ought to be waked up for breakfast, and Mom would argue that the child needed her sleep. Or they would be wondering about Charlie, perhaps; they must wonder about him. He had written to his mother last from Chicago; she would have pictured a thousand deaths for him. Probably she thought he had become a gangster or a stick-up man. But never, no, never, would she dream that he was sitting on a manger in a strange barn eating slop that was meant for pigs.

The boy jumped to the floor and carried the pan to the hog trough. He cast a wistful glance, as he poured out the milk, at the chubby little shoats that crowded up to the trough, gurgling and squealing with pleasure. Berkshires. A good breed, but his father raised Durocs. A Duroc, now, was the hog for hams. Dad would have killed hogs before now, most likely during the early November cold snap; the smoke house would be hanging full of hams and fat sides of bacon. And sausage; there would be yards of sausage hanging in the summer kitchen. Nobody could

mix sausage like Mom. He wondered how she had managed this year about scraping the guts; Mom could never endure that work, and Dad was always too busy, so it was Charlie's job. Charlie's job! While Charlie —

He rubbed the self-pitying tears from his eyes and went to wash his face at the barn well. By good luck he found a piece of mechanic's soap on the curb, and with it he scrubbed his face and his grimy arms.

"Here," said the farmer's voice, as Charlie stood blind, rinsing the soap out of his eyes. The boy felt a piece of grain sacking pushed into his hand, and he was grateful for the towel. He rubbed his face and his chapped hands till they stung in the raw wind.

"Thanks," he said humbly. "You've treated me mighty white."

"I had a good mind to turn you over," the farmer replied gruffly, "till I saw you was just a kid. Why in hell don't you go home where you belong?"

"I don't know," Charlie said stumbly. "What do you suppose my folks would say — if I turned up lookin' like this?"

"No tellin'," the farmer answered. "I hope they tan your hide right. But you better go back."

The boy stood a moment in thought. "What road is this?" he asked at last.

"The Poseyville pike."

"It ain't a state road?"

"No; you go down to the right a mile and a quarter and you come to the concrete. That's the Dixie."

"The Dixie Highway! God! How far to Greenville?"

"Forty-two mile. You got folks at Greenville?"

"Out o' Greenville two mile."

"Well, be along with you. Bein' as it's Saturday you'll likely catch a ride easy."

Saturday! Charlie kept repeating the lovely word to himself as he tramped down the road toward the Dixie. Why had he not known that it must be Saturday? All the dear magic of Saturday mornings in his school days swept over him and intoxicated him. The sun was well up in the sky, and its warmth on his back compensated for the cold wind that struck his face and buffeted his thin coat tails. The sharp rock surface of the pike cut into his worn soles, but he kicked the stones aside and plunged on with feverish eagerness. It was Saturday; in a short hour he would touch the

pavement of the familiar highway; before night-fall he would be at home.

He tried to remember why he had gone away from home. Why would anyone go away from home, from such a home as his? The shabby farm lay misted over with an aura in his mind's eye: it was a vague compound holding pictures of fat cattle, yellow sunshine over hay fields, the smell of salt-rising bread, warm baths behind the kitchen stove at night, clean clothes that his mother had washed, the wide dining table laden with fragrant food. He saw his mother's face, tender and worried, his little sister's impish smile, his father's quiet look. Dad was a good man — hard sometimes, but he had been good to him. He couldn't think how it had happened that he had quarrelled with Dad, and sold his little blooded bull calf, and run away to Chicago. What a fool, what a fool he had been!

How many nights he had lain awake that fall, in stuffy little boarding house bedrooms, in farm houses, under the stars in the lee of some roadside hay stack, pondering these things. On rainy days, or at night, or times when he was sick or laid off or wandering roofless and penniless, he would make up his mind to go home and beg his father's forgiveness. Then would come a bright morning or a few days' work, and his pride would reassert itself. He would rehearse to himself the circumstances of the quarrel, and he would be ashamed to give in, admit defeat. Or perhaps it was rather that he feared his father's scorn, feared the punishment that awaited him. No matter: it was all over now. The morning was fair and he told himself that he felt well and cheerful and courageous; yet he was going home. Better to go home and throw himself on his father's mercy, better to be a bond slave at home than to endure this empty freedom any longer.

Spurred by these thoughts, Charlie walked on faster and faster, and it was still early morning when he came to the Dixie. He paused and looked at the ugly gray ribbon of concrete with reverence, as his pioneer ancestors had paused, perhaps, to gaze for the first time upon the Ohio River. The traffic was not yet heavy; a farm wagon rumbled northward, and then a Ford overtook the wagon and hurried on to the same nearby market town. A big pleasure car presently passed, going south, in the direction of Greenville, and Charlie stepped forward and boldly motioned for a ride. But the sedan was full of women who laughed at the audacious ragamuffin, and Charlie suddenly

felt conscious of his uncut hair and his thin, dirty suit.

He began to walk down the highway, looking behind him now and then in the hope that a humbler car would come along. Once or twice he stopped and beckoned, but each time the driver passed him by. As the morning wore on the traffic became thicker, and car after car brushed past him and kept him close to the stony shoulders of the road. He watched the signposts set along the road — so many miles and tenths of miles to Wolfson and Company, Haberdashers — and figured by subtraction the diminishing distance to Greenville. It was late forenoon by the time the forty-two miles had slowly shrunk to thirty-eight.

The sanguine mood of the early morning had passed, and Charlie felt ready to sink with hunger and fatigue. He watched the farm houses along the road in the hope that he would come to one where he might beg with some chance of success. But the farms he saw were smug and thrifty, with great barns and neatly painted houses topped with bright lightning rods; he had learned that from such prosperous doorways no charity is dispensed. He trudged on drearily, while the pains of hunger heightened the heaviness of his limbs and the sharpness of the stones under his feet.

A big truck lumbered past, answering his signal with an impatient toot of the horn. He watched it go and cursed the driver's insolence. The truck was scarcely a hundred yards ahead when Charlie heard the report of an exploding tire, and saw the truck come to a stop. He felt an impulse of satisfaction; he would have rejoiced to see the old juggernaut roll over in the ditch. But after a moment he walked toward the scene, unable to forego the prospect of human conversation.

"Yeh, you can help," said the truck driver in answer to his question. "Take a-holt of this here and see if you can prize this tire off. The all-fired thing sticks like hell."

Charlie took one tire tool and the driver the other, and they worked and cursed for several minutes over the great stubborn tire. It came at last with a force that sent Charlie's lever spinning, and as the tool left his hand he toppled over backward on the pavement.

He came to dully at the taste of whisky on his lips, and looked up at the driver who was bending over him with a bottle in his hand.

"What'd you do, hit your head on the concrete?" the driver asked, not over-solicitously.

"Yes," said Charlie, though he knew it was not true.

"You look all in," commented the driver, who was already busy with the spare tire. "I can manage this all right by myself now. Why'n't you lay down on them sacks in the truck, and then you can ride along to Ridgeport? Goin' that way?"

"Greenville," Charlie answered, as he swung himself heavily into the truck bed. "How far you goin'?"

"I've got to make Louisville before sundown, or I was aimin' to before this damn blow-out."

Charlie made a place for himself on a pile of gunny sacks, and lay half asleep, looking about him with glazed eyes at the truck's cargo of empty beer bottles. A rum runner. That accounted for the driver's nervous haste and for the impatience with which he worked, one eye always cocked for the motorcycle cop. Charlie stretched out and dozed off to sleep; he could have slept if the truck had been loaded with nitroglycerine.

He was awakened in Ridgeport by the driver's voice.

"Hey, you! Wake up! I want you to run down to Sabin's café and get me a sandwich. It's a coupla blocks away, on the main drag."

Charlie sat up and looked up and down the strange village street, rubbing his eyes.

"I'd ruther not go there myself. I'll wait here. Bring me a hamburg with onion and a cup of coffee. And get yourself something. Make it snappy."

The truck driver handed Charlie thirty cents, and the boy, electrified by the touch of silver, jumped off the truck and ran towards the café. The smell of frying food in Sabin's place brought back the faintness he had felt before, but he stood by the open door and supported himself against a jamb. It seemed to him that the hamburgers would never be done. Minutes ticked away on the restaurant clock — it was now nearly two — and Charlie was tortured by the fear that the driver would go on without him. He shuddered at the thought of missing the truck, and yet — two sandwiches would be better than one.

When at last he had exchanged the money for two sandwiches and two paper cups of coffee, Charlie ran back as fast as he could go, gripping the cups in one hand and munching his sandwich from the other. His bitter luck had turned: the truck was waiting. Food, warm coffee, and cigarettes raised the spirits of man and boy, and for an hour they rode on amicably, comparing the vicissitudes of vagabond and bootlegger.

Suddenly, before he knew it or dreamed of it, Charlie found himself on a street in Greenville, watching the disappearing rum runner as it sped down the Louisville road.

He looked down the strange street. Every building, every shop front, every parked car was familiar; yet over all hung a veil of strangeness, for in four months nothing here had changed while in himself every fibre seemed made new. A few people passed and spoke to him as if they had not noticed his being gone. The short autumn afternoon was waning, and the farmers were loading the Saturday groceries and sacks of feed into their cars and starting home. He walked towards the public square, but before he reached the bank corner he met a neighbor of his father's and was offered a lift homeward. He got into the car and rode with the farmer, who seemed glad to see him and full of questions about the places he had visited and farming conditions in other parts of the state. Charlie answered him civilly, but his mind was not on these questions. His thoughts ran ahead of him, and the prospect of seeing his father, his mother and sister, all the sights of the farm, overcame him and made him a little sick with excitement.

At the first fence that bounded his father's land he got out and began to run up the path that made a short cut through the lower pasture. At the top of the hill was the milking shed, and at the watering trough outside it, silhouetted against the red evening sky, stood his father. Charlie stopped, trembling; he had an impulse to hide, to turn back, to run away. He had scarcely paused when the figure on the hilltop turned and rushed toward him, brushing past the astonished cows. Charlie went forward, and for the first time since his childhood was enfolded in his father's arms.

"Charlie," said the old man. "Charlie." Tears ran from his eyes, and his week-old beard grizzled against Charlie's cheeks.

"Well, Dad," Charlie said with a tremendous effort, "how's everything?"

The father did not answer, but taking his son by the hand he ran like a boy up the steep little hill. "Ma," he called, as he neared the house, "Ma! Charlie's come!"

It was like a great festival; no other day but Christmas in childhood could compare with it. They sat before the fire, the whole family together, and drank in with their eyes the beauty of each other's faces. Shy Janey, the little sister who

seemed to have grown inches in those few months, came and sat on Charlie's lap. His mother said little, but fixed her eyes on her son's thin face and miserable clothes. The father too was silent, but Charlie talked without stopping in a flood of nervous words. It was past seven o'clock before anyone thought of the milking.

"Are you hungry, son?" asked the mother, as

they rose and went about the evening tasks.

"God, yes!" said Charlie. But he did not have the courage to tell her how hungry he was and had been for days.

"Well, that's good," said Mom. "You couldn't have come to a better place, for we butchered the yearlin' just yesterday! Could you eat a piece of steak for supper?"

THE DOOR

By ARTHUR H. NETHERCOT

"And so they asked you to bring me back with you?" repeated Reeves between breaths, looking down at the two children by his side and trying to retain his dignity while jumping, in what struck him as an exceedingly ridiculous, grasshopper-like fashion, from stone to stone along the narrow beach. "What are their names anyhow? I know these people pretty well."

But the little girl, who was more companionable and talkative than her brother, could not answer him. They had not told her, and of course she had not asked. That would not have been polite. She herself seemed to be a very polite bit of a person.

"Well, what did they look like?"

A queer expression swept her face for an instant, and he thought that he had penetrated her incommunicativeness; but it was gone as flittingly as it had appeared. Her words came slowly and vaguely, as if she had to make an effort to remember. Old, that was it — old, but nice. They looked at one as if they wanted to hug one, but they didn't do so. Perhaps they thought it wouldn't be polite, on such short acquaintance. And they were weak, too — the old ones. They couldn't walk very well. Maybe they were even hungry — she didn't know. But she was sorry for them — those old ones. They were very nice.

A sudden unreasoning gust of anger swept over Reeves. Why shouldn't she be sorry for them? Heaven knows, the case sounded like a needy and deserving enough one. But he somehow hated to hear her talk about them in this manner.

"What were you two doing away out here?" he irately demanded. "Don't you know that you might have got lost — or been drowned — or — or hurt yourselves?" he ended rather lamely.

He let an aimless gaze pass out over the slate-colored lake. Against the cold horizon an ore-

boat was fading into the grey sky. Only the queue of thick black smoke blown stiffly out before her guided the eye to her, so deep was she in the water with her cargo of copper rock. He remembered how she and her like had sometimes kept him squirming in his bed for an entire night with the alternate wail and bellow of their whistles, which echoed along the pine-laden shores in a hideous symphony. Up and down the lake the ore-boats plodded, wallowing under the slightest blow when headed in one direction, standing up tall and dry when returning. There was a constant procession of them, he had been told, until the coast froze up tight for the winter.

To the north, less than half a mile away, another low, heavy ship glided around the sharp bend which formed part of the entrance to Death's Door. Yes, that was the name the spot had locally. Perhaps the fact that the district was called Door County had something to do with it, but that was not all. "Porte des Morts," he had seen it labeled on an old map down in the village. Certainly the skeletons of enough wrecks strewed the thin beach under the granite cliffs to invest the name with a sinister truth. In irritation he kicked at a huge timber lying gauntly across his path. A thick, rusty bolt stuck sharply upward, but the companion timber which it had once pierced had vanished. Near it lay the tattered triangle of a gull's wing, like the rakish lateen sail of a pirate craft, now pillaged and demolished. Death's Door! Names like that ought to be prohibited.

Suddenly he noticed, with a thump of the heart, that the boy had disappeared.

In a sort of panic he jerked the hand of the little girl. "Where's your brother?" he demanded. "I don't see him anywhere. Mind you, I'm not going to stand for any of his tricks."

She looked up at him in a sort of amused pity.

Funny how protective children sometimes become toward their natural protectors, he thought wryly. But he *was* jumpy this afternoon.

"He's just gone around the corner where the cliff turns," she calmed him. "*He's* all right."

Certainly, Reeves remembered now. This was the end of the peninsula — the point which the ships cut past on their course into the tumultuous waters of Green Bay beyond. Now he could see the boy himself, far ahead of them down the beach, leaping and sliding among the boulders like a circus clown, and every few seconds shouting for no reason at all. The high, chilly blasts from the Bay pushed Reeves roughly in the chest, but the lad did not seem to mind it. Where did boys get their vitality? Life and vigor, he thought, life and vigor! But they soon passed off.

A sudden thistle of steam blossomed over one of the funnels of the ore-boat, and an instant later her hoarse voice smote his ears. Then a shrill little piping whistle, blurred by the vicious wind, came in answer. Ah, there was the ferry-boat from the green island which formed the other jamb of the door — and making hard weather, too, even though he could discern only one or two forlorn passengers on the deck and not a single car in the waist. This was no day for a pleasant crossing; in fact, he wondered whether the skipper could make the ordinary landing at Gill's Rock at all, so exposed was it to a northwest wind. And the mail-boat as well — a tossing speck going in the other direction. His stomach rebelled at the very sight. No one in his senses would cross the Door on a day like this. In fact, so far as he was concerned, he never wanted to cross it. The side he was on was quite good enough for him.

He pulled his companion closer to him so that he would not have to shout so loud against the wind. He hated noise and physical discomfort — and always had done so. "Where is this place you're taking me to?" he inquired. "Aren't we almost there?"

She glanced up at him and then pointed with her free hand. "There it is. Don't you see — right ahead?"

His eye followed her motion. Yes, just two or three hundred yards away there was a spit of land, projecting for another fifty yards or so into the water. Funny he had never noticed it before. And on the end of the spit stood two or three buildings, ruined or at least in a bad state of disrepair. Could anyone live in them? One of them, indeed, was of fair size and stanchness, and its

uncompromising design at once suggested government construction. An official atmosphere, in fact, still pervaded the entire dilapidated group. Perhaps the Coast Guard had once had a station on this side of the channel instead of across it on the island. Not that it mattered. The important thing was that someone was apparently out in that desolate place and had sent for him. He was no settlement worker, but he didn't ordinarily turn down any reasonable request, especially when he was on his vacation.

The boy had paused in his headlong career and was waiting for them impatiently, while the wind whipped his loose jacket about him. "I thought you were never coming!" he cried, and then shrieked with elation as a long roller ran stealthily in and lashed out at his feet in a swirl of foam.

Reeves caught him by the coat. "Come away from there. The bottom falls off too quickly here to take any chances."

"Oh, I'm all right. I won't fall in."

The other paid no attention. He was looking out at the arm of land before him, and he did not like what he saw. The base of it was very narrow indeed — as if it had been almost pinched from the rest of the body and left dangling there. The waves were frothing in on the left, making such a splash as they died that he wondered whether he could pass without being soaked with spray. Nor was the ground smooth, either, for the same irregular boulders covered it as had studded the way over which he had come. If there were a tide, he would be afraid of being cut off; perhaps a storm might have the same effect.

"I don't like this," he remarked with misgiving.

The children laughed. He did not like being laughed at. Then, "Scaredy cat! scaredy cat!" they began mocking him. He liked this still less, though he knew they were only being playful. Nevertheless, even in fun —

"All right!" he shouted. "After the next wave!"

They were across before they knew it. A slip or two on the wet stones, a dash of spume blown from the crest of some breaker — and they were on a good, solid, level surface, mostly sand, to be sure, but pleasant to the feet after what they had endured.

Almost at once Reeves perceived a difference in the sound, too. It was as if stepping across the little neck of land had cut them off from the world they had been in. Everything was quiet, with scarcely a breeze stirring. He could still see the

ferry-boat buffeting the waves, which from here looked taller than ever, but the wind seemed somehow to rise over this place without ruffling it. High in the air he could hear an echo like a squall moaning through telephone wires, but here below his ear-drums almost ached at the abrupt release from pressure.

"Well, here we are," he said fatuously. Funny thing — his voice sounded quite cheerful, though heaven knows he did not feel cheerful inside. The children, however, perversely enough now appeared as subdued as they had been lively before. He'd have to brighten them up, for his own sake if not for theirs. "Come on! At last we'll see these old ones of yours!"

"Yes!" chimed in the little girl more briskly. "Won't they be happy?"

The boy slowly nodded. "They'll thank us a lot," he said.

The buildings, when approached in this way, were much larger and stronger than they had seemed at a distance. At least, the central one was. The others, consisting of two or three out-houses and a barn, were rotten and ramshackle, with their windows gaping wide or stuffed with rags. It was they which had concealed the main building from the shore, and made it look just a little more uninhabitable than it really was. Government brick will stand a good deal of wind and rain, though whitewash and green paint may soon wear off.

The boy ran ahead along the gravel path, marked incoherently here and there with fragments of whitened stone such as one sees around flower beds at country railroad stations, and before Reeves could call to him he had pushed open the door and entered. The girl was shocked too. "Oh, that wasn't very polite, was it?" she asked. "He really ought to have knocked, oughtn't he? — But the old ones won't mind, I guess."

Reeves, however, was more punctilious. He reached out and rapped cautiously on the swinging grey door. There was no answer except a hollow sort of echo. Another knock brought no further result. Disquieted, he looked down at the little girl, as if to ask her what to do next.

She smiled in her reassuring fashion. "They don't hear very well, I suppose. They won't mind if we go right in."

They entered through a short, dingy hall. There were hooks in it as if for coats or other garments, but none hung there now. The air had an acrid taste, like old dust which had recently

been disturbed. Perhaps the boy had brushed it from the walls or raised it from the warped floor in his impetuous passage.

Abruptly the hall ended and to his astonishment Reeves found himself standing at the top of a flight of stairs and looking downward into a large, high-ceilinged chamber, like a well. No suggestion of such an arrangement had appeared from outside. An ancient, yellowish light filtered in through three or four high-set, slit-like windows. He felt as if he were underground and the world were farther away than ever. The place somehow reminded him of a cathedral, though actually there was nothing in the least churchly about it. It made his scalp prickle.

Ah, now he had it! The subterranean Chapel of Joseph of Arimathea had given him the same feeling when he had suddenly seen it open beneath him at the turn of that long grey stone corridor. In the crypt of the vast unfinished cathedral, his breath had caught in his throat — he had been oppressed, suffocated. The mass of the great columns rising dimly to support the nave above had weighed upon his lungs, and his heart had faltered in response to its mystery. The story of how, during the excavation, the unsuspected cavern had been unearthed in the hill and how the architect had gratefully altered his plans to take advantage of this God-sent opportunity had appealed to Reeves's sense of the fit and the inspired. And now also, as then, his knees trembled and he panted for air.

He was descending the stairs into the yellow gloom, for his guide had not hesitated. He saw her at the bottom, watching him. The boy ought to be somewhere around too. He'd tell him what he thought of him for running away like that. But no, he couldn't see him anywhere even yet. There must be other rooms beyond this.

Now that he was actually in it, the room was after all commonplace enough. Obviously, it had been associated with sailor folk. In addition to two or three heavy chairs and a table, it contained a model of a two-masted schooner in one corner and in another a small brass cannon, such as was once used in shooting a line to a wrecked or sinking ship. An old map, almost a mate to the one he had seen in the village, hung dismally from the wall, one upper corner which had torn loose from its nail waving quietly in a draft that seemed to emanate from the fireplace. The ashes on the hearth, however, were dead and hard. A battered sextant lay upon the mantel. An aging seine, with

a great gash in it, was spread out on the floor for mending, but Reeves stepped over it as if it had been a snare.

"Well, where is everybody?" he asked in as conversational a tone as possible, but the words sounded weak and muffled in the stale air. A whiff of mice, which he did not relish, drifted across his nostrils.

"They must be in the other room," suggested the girl. "But isn't this a nice place to play?"

His grunt was not very enthusiastic. "You didn't bring me here to play, you know. Where are these old folks, anyhow? It's getting late, and we must be home before dark."

The light was indeed perceptibly waning, and he glanced longingly at the stairway which already typified escape. The only other outlet was a narrow door, once white, to the left of the fireplace. With an access of vigor he strode across the floor, catching his foot for an instant in the net, and flung the door open. It resisted slightly, as if he were pushing some imponderable object aside with it, and he thought that he heard a brief, swishing rush, ended by a soft creak.

The first thing that he saw through the opening was the figure of the boy, standing poised and wide-eyed on the farther side of the room. Something odd about his expression made Reeves hesitate. And yet it was an appeal more than a warning. Reeves's heart thumped again, but before he could move he felt the girl shove his arm aside and thrust herself past him.

"There you are!" she cried gaily to her brother, and her innocence in this dubious place smote the man's breast painfully. "Why didn't you wait for us? Why didn't you call to us where you'd gone?"

The boy stared at her dumbly for an instant, running his tongue around his lips. Then, in one flash, his natural expression returned, and Reeves wondered whether the light had not simply been playing a trick on him. He himself was overwrought by this fatiguing trip, that was all. He was getting too old for such scatter-brained expeditions. He should have made inquiries in the village and let affairs take their normal and proper course for such cases — a basket of canned stuff from the general store, a load of wood, or perhaps even a small check.

"I've been waiting for you!" said the boy. "Come on in, and I'll introduce you."

The initial impression that Reeves had as he stepped inside was that of cold — a dank, clammy

sort of cold that he had always associated with places underground. But of course that was just what this place was. Unhealthy, unnatural, he called it. Who would want to live continually in a cold sweat like this? Unconsciously he pulled out his handkerchief and dabbed at his wrists and forehead.

The next thing was the emptiness. In the dusk, he thought at first that the room was completely bare — as bare as a tomb. He saw no chairs, no table, no benches. After a moment, however (perhaps because his eyes were growing accustomed to the light, or perhaps because the boy's manner turned his attention in that direction), he became aware of an alcove at the far end of the chamber, and this alcove, he perceived, was almost filled by a huge, old-fashioned bed. Its polished walnut posts glimmered dully in the dimness, and a mass of rumpled bed-clothes piled high on top made a splash of grey for them to reflect. But no sign yet of the old ones. Was this some silly jest that these supposedly innocent youngsters were playing on him, trusting as he always was in children?

"Where are they?" he demanded, but the boy remained mute. He seemed to have forgotten where he was — to be seeing something, or re-seeing something, out of their view.

Reeves approached the alcove, his lips tight. He told himself that he was very angry, and tried to assume all the outward signs of passion. If he acted angry, he would become angry — or so the psychologists had said when he went to school. There was no telling what they were saying now.

He would have sworn that the bed was empty, then. It was very large, however, and was heaped up with all manner of blankets, coats, and dresses in meaningless confusion. All the wearing apparel, everything of warmth, in the house had seemingly been piled here together. Almost anything, he thought, might lie concealed beneath this turmoil.

He stretched out his hand to pull back the cover when, with a start, he saw that the bed was not empty after all. From the trough of a pillow a pair of deep eyes peered up at him. The face was that of a man, a large man, and yet the feeling Reeves got was that of size without weight. The skin was sallow, and the cheeks were sunken. They made him think of a re-filled pit after the first heavy rain. There were dark pouches under the eyes in the big head, which was sparsely thatched with scraggly white hairs.

When the figure saw Reeves, it began to move. Slowly and feebly it struggled to a sitting position, by means of elbows and hands. Reeves knew that he ought to offer aid, and yet he could not bring himself to do so. An apologetic, slow smile came to the man's lips, and still Reeves could not move. Certainly this person deserved his pity.

"So the children brought you — the good children — the kind children!" There was a suspicion of a foreign accent in the voice, a sort of caressing lisp which should have been attractive to Reeves's ears. "Let me thank you so much for coming. It was so kind!"

He extended a trembling hand from the bed-clothes, and the other could not help taking it. . . .

It was horrible. The man's clasp was soft, gentle; but at the first touch Reeves felt that a contact had been established between them that he could not break. His muscles went weak, flabby, and cold. His body was being drained of its strength, as if an artery had been tapped and his blood were bubbling rapidly away. This must be what transfusion was like; next time he read about a case in the papers he would know. He tried to pull away, but he could not. His brain sent the command to his nerves, and his nerves transmitted it to his muscles, but his muscles were paralyzed. Not a sign of what was going on within him could he show without. Quiet, placid, calm, he knew he looked, and yet he was about to faint, to collapse.

And all the time the man went on talking, while Reeves appeared to be listening attentively.

"You will excuse this impoliteness, I know. One must keep some warmth inside him to live, and there was no fire. Bed was the last resort. Everything in the house I brought here which could give warmth, and it is not yet sufficient. But it cannot last long. That is why I asked them to bring you here. I hope you understand?"

Still he grasped Reeves's hand. Still his soft voice flowed on. In the fervor of his plea he placed his other hand over the first. Reeves went dizzy. The silent struggle continued, but it could not go on much further. This was the end.

Then, with a jerk, he was free. The old man had released him. Reeves felt that he was staggering, and yet he knew that he was really not doing so. He looked down at his side, and there were the children. That was the reason the old man had let go his hand. Now there was a benevolent, kindly expression on the other's face as he

gazed at the boy and girl — all but his eyes. His eyes were baffled and hard.

The girl's innocent young voice was like a cordial to Reeves. His heart began to pump and the warmth streamed again through his body. He must have been delirious a moment ago, he told himself. There was nothing here but a poor, perhaps dying, old man, who needed his help.

"I hope you are both a lot better now," he heard her say in her high treble. Both? What did she mean? There was nothing wrong with him, or if there was, how could she know?

Then he saw that she was not referring to him at all — that she was looking beyond the old man at someone else in the bed. Why, there were two of them! But how could that be? There had been no one else there a moment ago, he was convinced. On the other hand, from the start the children had always spoken in the plural. It had been the "old ones" — not the "old one."

Yes, there was another! — an old woman! She must have been watching them all the while! A new gust of anger swept over him. He hated being spied on; he was always upset when someone came into a room without his knowing it.

She was so tiny it was no wonder he had overlooked her among the chaos of bedding. Her face was shriveled and wrinkled like a butternut before it is husked, and her neck and hands were dreadfully emaciated. Still, with her bright eyes and the knitted cap she had pulled over her head, she looked like many grandmothers he had known and loved.

"Yes — yes, much better — since you have come," she croaked. That was the only word that Reeves could find for her voice, though he didn't want to be unfair. "As the mister said, you are all so good."

"Now can't we go and play?" inquired the boy persuasively.

Involuntarily Reeves grasped him by the shoulder. He wasn't going to be left alone with this pair, no matter how simple and harmless they now appeared to be. But yet, how silly of him! A full-grown man, and two infirm old folks!

"Please!" pleaded the boy.

Reeves remembered the ship and the cannon and the other things that would have delighted him when he was a youngster. "All right, go ahead," he said. "Just for a minute or two."

They were gone in a whirl. The room, as the door slammed, felt dead — the air flat, enervated.

The old man spoke to him. "Won't you sit

down, please?" he suggested, and Reeves noticed a small three-legged stool which he had missed before.

"Perhaps the gentleman would like a light," prompted the woman. "Here is it pretty dark, I think."

Reeves agreed with her. It was getting darker and colder. He wished that he had worn his heavy overcoat; in fact, he almost envied them all their coverings. He shivered as he opened a small cupboard which she pointed out, and took from it a smudgy kerosene lamp. Little more than a film of oil remained in the bottom of it. The cupboard was otherwise empty.

Removing the glass chimney and setting it carefully on the shelf, Reeves turned up the wick and struck a match. The cheerful crackle and the wisp of fire warmed him, but the wick would not ignite. He struck a second match and tried again, but with the same result. The thing simply would not light.

"Here, let me try it," the old man said. "I know the tricks of it."

Intent on conquering the balky contrivance, Reeves held it out thoughtlessly, and before he could back away his fingers were again in the soft vise. Once more he was petrified. His voice clung to his throat. He pulled and jerked — at least, he imagined that he was pulling and jerking — but his body remained immobile. He saw the old man's eyes fixed on him, like a doctor's on a patient to whom he has given an injection. He saw the old woman lean forward curiously, greedily, to watch the struggle. His strength was ebbing — faster and faster. A chilly breeze seemed to sweep through the room, and a humming clogged his head. This time it was surely the end. No human being could endure this and live.

Through a sort of grey mist he saw the old woman suddenly stoop forward, her eyes still upon him. She raised her arm, and he knew that she too was going to place her hand upon his, which, he could see, still held the lamp. Reeves's wrath came back to him with a rush. No, he wouldn't stand for it!

With a tremendous effort of the will, he gave a great wrench. There was a crash, and a groan. Swaying, he gazed downward and saw the lamp smashed to pieces, and a large body, clad in a flannel shirt and a pair of khaki trousers, lying inert on the floor.

The children in the next room had heard the fall and came running in with cries of alarm.

Reeves stood stupidly, weaving twisted circles with his shoulders, too dazed to say a word.

It was the old woman who took charge. Slipping noiselessly from the bed, she bent over the body, and took the great head in her lap. How ludicrous she looked in her dowdy black dressing gown, thought Reeves, and yet how lovingly she touched the old man's face. There was a deep cut visible on the left temple and yet, strange to say, no blood was trickling from it.

"He fell out from bed," she was explaining rapidly, yet collectedly, to the children. "He was weak from not eating, I guess. He hit his head on the chair," and she pointed to the stool where Reeves was to have sat.

Oh, so that was what had happened, thought Reeves incoherently. What was the matter with him, anyway? He must be going mad! Here was this poor old fellow — starving — perhaps dead at his feet — and all his, Reeves's, fault. What stupidity! What callousness! What selfishness!

He took an unsteady step forward.

The little girl was there ahead of him. Her face, rosy with health and excitement, was almost touching the woman's. The woman glanced up and saw it. An avid look came into her eyes, and she smiled. Her eyes and her smile contradicted each other, and Reeves could not understand the cause. Surely anyone with such a tender smile loved children. Then he saw her raise her arms slowly, inch by inch. The two — the girl and the woman — gazed deep into one another's eyes. The girl seemed fascinated by what she saw there; so was Reeves, for he could not lift a finger. The woman's hands were now within a foot of the child's shoulders. Skinnily, they were about to drop, while Reeves tried to shout out in horror. Then a tremor jerked the woman's whole body, she shook her head violently as if to rid herself of some hateful image, and her hands dropped in despair to her lap.

She swallowed convulsively. "Run out to the well and get some water!" she commanded the children. "You know where it is. The bucket is there. Fast!"

"Yes, we'll hurry. Oh, we're so sorry!" they cried; and they were gone.

Still bewildered by what he had seen — indeed, uncertain whether he had seen anything and wondering whether perhaps he was not coming down with some fever which had already touched his brain — Reeves discovered that he could walk,

and moved forward again. Solicitously he bent over the pair on the floor.

"Let me help you get him on the bed," he offered. "I am frightfully sorry that this happened, but we'll pull him through all right."

She thanked him. She seemed to bear no malice. Perhaps he had only imagined that he had been responsible for the accident. The old man was probably weak from lack of nourishment, as she had said.

Together they awkwardly lifted him on to the bed. He wasn't so heavy as he looked, just as Reeves's initial impression had hinted. But whether there was life or not, Reeves could not tell.

Together they leaned over to watch his face. One of the old woman's hands touched his. Reeves shuddered and straightened up. He turned his eyes on her and saw that she was looking at him as she had looked at the girl. But there was no tender smile on her lips now. No mercy showed there.

Must he go through it all again? — the iciness, the oozing away of his strength through his fingertips, the paralysis? By God, no! Not this time! He was stronger than this one!

He was right — or at least he had control of his limbs thus far. He could strike out, he could wrestle, he could drag her with him. He tried to find the door, but the room was almost totally dark by now. And he had lost his bearings. She held on to him like a damned leech. Her weight was nothing, no — but he couldn't stand this new drain on his strength after what had gone before. If he could only find the door — or if only the

children would return! He lashed out again. He whirled about and felt her body wince as it struck something hard. It was the bed. A harsh, stertorous breathing added itself to their gasps for breath. He knew what that meant — the other old one was coming back to consciousness. He must escape before that could happen. Two against one was too much for any man. . . . Why, this was a nightmare! This wasn't real! The whole thing was a put-up job! He must wake up, though, before this dream got the better of him! —

He heard the creaking of the floor. — He was going to wake up. — A huge bulk loomed over him. — Wake up, wake up! — Another hand clutched his shoulder — and suddenly the clamor of the Door, which had been hovering in the air overhead, descended upon him. . . .

The chambermaid of the south corridor, third floor, of the Winston-Fletcher hotel waited until Tuesday afternoon to get into the room of the retired lawyer, Martin D. Reeves. When Mr. Reeves, whose regular habits were well known, had not made his appearance by that time, and her repeated knockings were unanswered, she called the manager. The door was forced, and Mr. Reeves was found dead in his bed. Although the bed-clothes were tangled and snarled as if a struggle had taken place, the doctor's verdict was heart failure. Lying open on the desk was found his will, made out the day before in the names of Peter and Anne Reeves, the dead man's favorite nephew and niece.

PROGENY

By MANNEL HAHN

The broad pampa, stretching without variation to faraway horizons, seemed endless. One single *ombu*, a massy fortress of green in the yellowy sea of cardoon thistles, gave emphasis to the immensity of space. The cattle made small mark in the reedy stalks that came to or above their shoulders.

Following some hidden trail, weaving slightly to avoid thick clumps of thistles, a small spot travelled through the vastness. Hour after hour it progressed in space, without source and without goal. At one vigorous growth, where water must

have existed, it stopped for a while, and a thin column of heated air, too transparent to be called smoke, marked where a gaucho, an Argentine plainsman, cooked his meal of meat and brewed his midday *mate*.

Thus entered Joaquin Fiore into the Pampa Central, whence no one knows. He rode alone for days upon days, looking over the land that the state owned and offered to him who would take and hold.

Joaquin found no place he might hope to hold, however. Cattle need water. And every place

that offered water, and many more besides, where water sometimes collected in rainy seasons, were held already by others. Of all, the best land, ten leagues in every direction from the fortress set there by Rosas, was owned by no less a one than Rosas' own general, commander of the district.

So it came that Joaquin Fiore, Argentine with a Spanish tongue and Italian name, came to be first a rider, then body-servant of General Ramon de la Torre. The General held his position because of his loyalty to the Tyrant and because in a frontier district he kept discipline. His method was simple. For every crime there was a criminal: for every criminal there was a punishment. Therefore, for every crime there was a punishment. If possible, it was visited on the criminal. So the entire countryside helped find the guilty one, fearful they might themselves pay for his crime if they hesitated. Shelter for criminals was dangerous.

The year that Rosas fell, the thistles dried so that fires swept over the land and made concealment and travel more difficult. In his last great struggle, the Tyrant called for more and more troops, and as he weakened his forces, Ramon de la Torre redoubled his punishments, until a wiser man might have feared. Even in his own guard he became violently strict. So it was that for failure to report another's dereliction, Joaquin Fiore received twenty lashes on his bare back, while the General's wife and daughter Teresa watched and laughed.

The news of the Tyrant's fall spread more rapidly than news had ever flashed before, and Ramon de la Torre, once Generalissimo of a district larger than Spain itself, awoke one morning to find his estancia in flames. His courage carried him to the patio, where he found his two nephews lying with their throats neatly cut. Others of his officers, stripped and hacked, had paid for their brief authority with their blood.

Prudence drove the former general to seek another outlet from his house. As he started back to his rooms, Joaquin Fiore, showing no trace of his last month's punishment, stepped to his side and saluted.

"I have here gaucho clothes for your illustrious family," he told Ramon. "If you hasten through this door, I have four of the best horses of my *tropilla*. It will be long before anyone will overtake us."

Ramon de la Torre waited not an instant. In fewer minutes than they believed possible his wife and daughter Teresa, those who had seen Joaquin

stripped and lashed in that patio now soaked with blood, and the General who had ordered it done, were mounted on Joaquin's horses and following Joaquin himself.

Three days they travelled without meeting anyone, though parties of former soldiers, drunk with murder and pillage, were scouring the pampa. Three nights they camped at damp spots where water could be had at the price of labor, and it was Joaquin's labor that bought it. On the fourth day Joaquin declared they must enter a town.

"It will be safe. We are gauchos from your estancia. Senorita Teresa must appear to be my wife—you are her parents and my honored parents-in-law. We have no reason to love the General—these stripes on my back will be our passport. Yet we fear the anger of those who come, so we left our home and travel to a new place."

"*Que suerte*," remarked Teresa. "What luck you were lashed so recently."

So it was settled, and they entered boldly into the fonda or inn and took wine and bread, and Joaquin told the story of their flight and showed his scarred back. It is true his wife started with anger—or was it affection?—when he called her "Teresa my dear," and bade her bring in the saddle bags; and his beloved old father-in-law was so overcome at the recital of de la Torre's crimes that he muffled his face in his poncho. But many others felt the same way about it.

The poor inn boasted no great number of rooms. The four must share one, a separate building, with solid adobe walls. After the evening meal of stew and beans, Joaquin settled the score, advising their host they would travel early in the morning to avoid the midday heat. They then retired, Joaquin going first to make the beds. He took two heavy billets of wood. After they had all entered, he barricaded the door, sole opening to the room, with one. Stolidly, as he did everything, he picked up the other, raised it to his shoulder and brought it down on Ramon de la Torre's head. The fugitive general dropped like a poled ox.

Showing no emotion, Joaquin drew his knife and forced the two women to hold their arms behind them and towards him, where he bound them so that there was no doubt of their remaining bound. Then he shoved them to the ground, where they lay, glaring, swearing, but afraid to scream, until he roughly gagged them with garments stripped from the fallen father.

Joaquin gagged the senseless man, bound his thick wrists with rawhide braided rope, trussed him to the overhead beam, and dashed water in his face until he regained consciousness.

Only one answer did he make to the muffled moans of his victims.

"*Que suerte*," he quoted. "What luck I was lashed so recently."

Long before daybreak, he bound the wife by her now unconscious husband, and forced Teresa to mount with him. They rode through the sleeping village, but halted at the outskirts, while he rapped at the door of a mean hut until the occupant came out.

"In the room where I slept last night at the inn you will find the fiend de la Torre and his wife. They must not live, yet who am I to avenge all who suffered?"

The sleepy peon struggled to understand while they rode swiftly away to the ruins of the estancia of Teresa's father. Neither father nor mother was ever heard of again, save in sinister rumor.

Joaquin Fiore claimed the estate of the defunct General de la Torre as father of Teresa de la Torre's illegitimate child. So he made his claim, so was the child baptised and so was the final award made. The triple shame aided childbed to kill the once patrician Teresa. And the two Joaquin Fiores, father and son, became lords of the vast territory.

"*El Hijo del Diablo*," they called young Joaquin — "The Son of the Devil." In a land where brutality is so common that ordinary decency is deemed astounding, he seemed daily to invent new tortures. He rode horses until they dropped, and delighted in lashing them to death. He braided ropes from hide stripped from living colts. Finding cows and calves bogged in wet spaces, he burned dry thistles beneath them to watch their struggles. And his peons, free in theory, fared little better, but still they loved him.

It was strange, the hold the lad had on them. His father adored him, and showed it only by giving the lad a free hand. The whole countryside saw in him a vast vengeance on his mother's family. The boy roamed the plains, ten leagues in every direction from the house, and even more when the spirit moved him.

When he was twelve, he began to take over the duties of the estancia. On his name-day, his father called him in, and handed him a silver-handled *rebenque*, the heavy whip of the pampas.

"Now thou art a man," said the elder, looking

at the slight replica of himself before him. "It is thy duty to pick the pastures for the herds. And remember, the increase and the price the cattle bring is in thy keeping."

"I thank thee, my father, for the gift thou hast given me," said the boy. "The trust will not be misplaced." He strode forth, called for his pony, and rode out. For weeks he slept on the pampa, visiting every spot in the vast range, appearing at the estancia house only for an occasional meal with his father, and then riding forth. Sometimes he would spend the nights with the herdsmen, ordering changes, commending the choice, until he knew where every cow fed and where it should go next.

A year later, reports came to the old man, still hale and hearty in his advancing years, that the son was spending nights in the hut of one Juan, whose daughter was well spoken of. The father laughed. In due time, Joaquin hijo (junior) appeared with Juan's daughter at the civil registry. The child was registered, "Joaquin, illegitimate son of Joaquin Fiore and Juana without other name, both unmarried." Juana, her son acknowledged, went back to rear him, content.

Within the next ten years, Joaquin's appearance at the registry became common. Not only the peons' daughters, but the women of the town that grew about the estancia house, appeared from time to time at the registry to secure acknowledgment of their children — and to all of these Joaquin nodded assent. When asked if they were all his, Joaquin replied — "I know not — they may be."

The old man, in his later days, sometimes passed through the village scattering largess to his grandsons and their mothers. To some, who looked strong, he was generous, to others niggardly. He never interfered, but one woman, who pestered him with claims of his son's regard, he ordered from his estates, and his son saw that the order was obeyed. Joaquin himself was capricious in his treatment of the women. At times he loaded them with gifts, at times he neglected them entirely.

After Joaquin the father closed his eyes in his last long rest, there were many maidens and matrons who preened themselves to enter the vast estancia house as its mistress, but save for the servants no woman entered. After the final pronouncement of the courts which awarded Joaquin the son the vast estates, his mode of living changed not at all. For several years he had managed the entire business, and apart from owning them out-

right, and being responsible for the funds, there was no change. One detail harrassed. The master of millions could not read, and although the bank accepted his thumbmark without question, Joaquin *hijo* refused to draw on his riches until he learned to read the documents presented for his approval and seal.

"You must be terribly lonesome in that big house, all alone," sighed more than one companion of a night to the ever-richer Joaquin.

"Yes, thanks be to God," was his constant reply, "and by His grace, I hope to remain so." So son after son — illegitimate — appeared on the registers of the village.

Time passed. The railroads cut through the vast estate, and doubled and trebled its value. The herds, in spite of thieves and fevers and the yearly sales to market, increased.

"I wish I might go to Buenos Aires," sighed one girl, nestled in his lap in a mean hut on the borders of his estate one night.

"Peace, little one," he ordered her, yet when morning came, he opened his big purse and showed bills and silver upon her until there need be no lack of money for the trip to the capital he had never seen. But it was dangerous to ask favors of the man. Some of his sons came, asked, and received. Others came, asked, and fled howling, with aching backs.

One bold spirit stalked into the office and addressed the patriarch as "Father." Tickled by the audacity, the giant gave him all he asked, and more. Another heard of this success, and imitated the approach. Joaquin grew red with anger, and drove the daring one forth with blows and curses.

In his sixties, the giant Joaquin was still lithe and active. His horses carried his huge bulk league upon league each day. Fences and plowed fields had driven him to confine his travels to his own estates, but he had never, since his early years, travelled more than two days' journey from the house of his birth. Buyers of cattle strove to persuade him to travel, at least to the Capital. One day, he summoned his mayordomo.

"Here is a check," he informed that surprised official. "I go to the City."

For the first time, he boarded a train. Unannounced he plunged into the streets of Buenos Aires, and, cowed by the hurtling traffic, burrowed into the first hotel he encountered. Booted and spurred, swinging his *rebenque*, he asked for horses. The porters scurried around, but one bold soul insisted an auto would be better.

"Then bring me an auto, and a groom to tend it," he ordered, handing a hundred *peso* note to the officious porter. While he waited, he sent messages to the cattle buyers, and they came in droves to do him homage. When his auto came, he had little use for it, for the cattlemen insisted on being his hosts. Nothing was too much for them to give him.

Knowing his reputation, the cattle buyers arranged parties for his amusement. The first one, the second day of his stay, was glorious in setting and in feminine companionship. But Joaquin sat gloomily through the great dinner and when the girls would have entertained him, he put them aside. Only his innate politeness kept him from leaving his hosts.

"Strumpets. Harlots. I take my women or accept their gifts — but I do not buy," he complained. The next party proving a duplicate of the first, he slipped out of his hotel before daybreak and sought another in a new quarter of town. There, after binding the porter to him by gifts of gold, he tried a new mode of amusement.

The first afternoon, with his guide, he visited the National Museum of Fine Arts. He gazed moodily at the pictures, swept the sculptures with a contemptuous glance, and dragged his companion away for a drink. Then, to while away the hours until dinner, the guide suggested the cinema.

"Liar!" the giant denounced him when he explained what the cinema was. "Pictures cannot move!" But, in fairness, he went. He sat enthralled. The film was the baldest melodrama, featuring the sacrifices of a father for his son. To the porter's amazement, Joaquin wept copiously.

"It is worth a hundred sacrifices, to have a son worthy of one," he explained as they rode back to the hotel in his magnificent car. "Did you see the memorial that the son erected to his father? A huge building of marble, with an altar, it was. Which of my sons would do that for me?"

Abandoning his visit as suddenly as he had made it, Joaquin dismissed his car, took a train back, and suddenly appeared at his own house. The startled mayordomo put out his guests and appeared to his master, afraid. Joaquin ignored the trespass. He took up his life much as it had been.

But, one by one, he invited some of his sons to be his guests. They came, they stayed a few days, and they departed. Some, presuming on their relationship, were booted unceremoniously from the

great doors. Others, meek and humble, left howling with the *rebenque* swinging across their shoulders. One, a clever thief, was caught after he had pocketed several thousand *pesos* in his brief stay. To his amazement, Joaquin handed him yet another thousand, and bowed him from the place. But none stayed. Even the nearest to a favorite, one who met his father with impudence and faced him with audacity, was dismissed, a trifle regretfully, with a huge present of money.

"Love?" ruminated Joaquin Fiore, regretfully. "Not a bit of it. Only hopes of something from me. Not one offered to help me."

Once more he girded his loins for travel. This time he merely saddled a horse and rode away, leaving word to expect him when he returned. He rode across the pampa towards Rosario, second city of the republic. In this place less bustling than Buenos Aires and far more comfortable for a gaucho, he stayed and stayed. After two weeks in the hotel, he moved into an apartment and ordered new clothes, "city cut."

One day he strode into a foreign bank and asked for the manager. The surprised porter would have turned him into the hands of some underling, but Joaquin's booming voice carried through the doors into the manager's office, and the occupant, a young American, came forth to see the cause of the disturbance. Slightly mystified, he invited the giant in.

"I have always banked with the Bank of the Argentine Nation," explained Joaquin Fiore. "Today I asked for some help, and they refused. Here I shall deal with you—if I find you worthy."

The amused banker assured him that the institution would be found so. But amusement gave way to astonishment when the almost illiterate plainsman began asking questions. Joaquin could quote the prices of meat and grain in London, Liverpool, and Chicago. He knew the exact costs of transmitting funds throughout the republic and abroad. He had a grasp of arbitraging—which many bankers have not. The astute young manager, expecting to be bored, was put to it to keep up his end of the conversation.

"Good," finally announced Joaquin. "Here is a check. I deposit it. I sign with this," and he held up his thumb. The manager took the check and rang for the papers to be signed. While the boy went after them, he looked at the check, and gasped. But he was glad he had put himself out for the rough man seated across from him! The

formalities completed, Joaquin Fiore withdrew, bowing and receiving bows. Thereafter, he had no difficulty reaching the manager's office!

Almost at once, Joaquin adopted the habit of dropping in once or twice daily to discuss events with Martin, the manager. Brushing by the porters, he would ceremoniously knock at the door until bidden to enter, and would then stand in the opened frame, head bent to pass the lintel, until again invited. Once in the office, he would settle himself to a comfortable seat and discuss men, women, beasts, and crops until ready to depart. If Martin were busy, he would wait outside, standing, until the visitors left.

After a month of this, Martin invited the elder man to dine with him. Joaquin accepted with alacrity. Martin debated whether to make a big to-do over his largest depositor, or merely to offer him a good meal. He decided on the latter. Joaquin came, met Mrs. Martin, ate enormously, poked rough jokes at his host, and left early.

The next day he was waiting at the bank when it opened. Martin was one of the early arrivals, and Joaquin Fiore was in his office one minute after the grilled gates were opened. Seeing a pile of mail on the desk, Joaquin refused to speak until it was disposed of, a courtesy that Martin appreciated.

These matters disposed of, the giant began to compliment Martin on his family.

"I, alas, have none," he complained. Martin smiled. "Oh, yes, I know what you think. Two hundred and fifty one sons, my rascally clerk assures me. By the way—I must discharge him at once. He is a fool. That is many sons. Some must be daughters. But they are not mine—save by accident. You are lucky."

"By the way, buy for me this whole square of land whereon this bank stands."

Martin gasped. It was a tremendous order. "What price will you pay?" he asked Joaquin.

"What do I care? Buy it. Only, not at the first price asked. And I pay you the commission—not the seller. Remember that."

"But, Don Joaquin, this may run into more than you care to pay," protested Martin.

"Nay—I will pay. Here is another check—but you will not need it. Are there papers to be signed?"

"I need only your word. But the law may ask papers. I shall have them made ready. Meanwhile, I shall purchase, as you direct."

Martin set to work and succeeded in securing

the property. Then he was ordered to secure release of the few leases on the land secured. The bank held a long lease, and he offered to arbitrate it with Joaquin Fiore. But when the great man had explained his plans, Martin surrendered the lease without payment.

"How much have you made out of this?" queried Joaquin, when the final papers were signed, and the bank moving to temporary quarters across the street.

"The bank has received the regular commission. Myself, nothing," Martin smiled.

"That is not right," protested Joaquin. "You have done it all — not the bank."

"No, the bank has done it. I receive my pay from the bank, and must not accept anything aside from that." Joaquin dropped his big hand on Martin's shoulder.

"I know you are honest," he said, and left. That evening Mrs. Martin received a huge bouquet of flowers, and on the card was a thumbprint. It was an unusual attention.

Then, on the newly-acquired block of land, huge activity set in. The old buildings tumbled down, and a new structure, covering the entire square, arose. It was a trifle bizarre — the architectures of a dozen lands all met here; yet there was a certain stateliness in the bulk of it. Fourteen stories it towered, with stores and banking offices and entrances to apartments all around the street sides. The tiled floors were of ornate design, the iron grills of the balconies twisted and writhed, the stucco of the walls was ornamented with tracings. Even the elevator cages, the servants' stairways, the roof-tiles carried some designs.

"Look," whispered the people as they passed. "There it is again — 'J. FIORE'."

It was true. In every possible place, the name of the owner was carefully worked in imperishable as well as perishable materials: Wrought into iron grills, burned into burnished tile, scratched into the stucco, traced in brick.

When the contracts were ready, Martin did a bit of figuring.

"See here," he protested. "This price you have put for our rental is unfair." Joaquin stiffened.

"I meant it to be most fair," he said coldly. "But I shall not argue with you. Write it as you will — it is all one to me."

"No, no!" apologized Martin. "You misunderstand me. It is unfair to you. It will barely pay for the merest upkeep of these quarters we are to occupy."

Joaquin was all smiles again.

"Then it is as I wished," he assured Martin. "You and your bank have been more than just with me. In rewarding the bank, I can perhaps reward you. No? So I make it easy for you to pay the rent — not true? Good."

"But the income on all of this, even if you rent everything, will never pay you," Martin went on, after adding the figures and working with them a few minutes. Joaquin burst into his loud guffaw.

"That is my jest," he explained. "You know our Argentine law — eh? I can leave only five per cent of my wealth where I wish it to go. The balance must go equally to all of my sons and daughters, who hate me as I despise them. Bastards, every one. But since I have recognized them, no will of mine can alter their right to inherit their share of my goods. If I had my way, they would never get a cent!"

"I would you were a son of mine, my boy. You alone, of all the men I have met in my life, have acted as a friend, not for what you might make out of me, but because you wanted to be a friend. You have made nothing yourself — never fear, I have checked all you did — and the bank made only a reasonable profit. That is unusual. If I could, I should recognize you as a son, so that you might inherit a portion of my estate. But I fear you would be in bad company!" Again he belowered with laughter.

"And do you think these sons of mine — may they never prosper! — would build me a monument?" continued Fiore. "Not they! So I have erected my own memorial — this, Fiore's Building. The courts can never sell it, for it will never pay. Two pesos for every one hundred I now spend. So here it stands until God Himself pleases to take it, my monument, my legacy to those worthless ones, and my jest."

Martin was forced to join Joaquin in laughter. Soon after the building was completed, he came to Martin.

"I go back to my estancia. Will you come and be my mayordomo?"

"Thank you for the offer. I cannot leave here. My future is in banking. Besides, you have a mayordomo now."

"Him — he leaves the day I get back."

"But that would be wrong, to let him go to take me."

"Pah — he goes anyway. Either he has stolen, which will make him rich and means I must dismiss him, or he has not, which means he is a fool."

Do not misunderstand me — you are different being of another race."

In the end, Martin was forced to accept — the post was made so attractive. Mrs. Martin became chatelaine of the big estancia-house, and rough Joaquin Fiore never ate another meal in his own home unwashed or in working garb. This was entirely of his own volition.

"I have never before known a lady," he explained.

Martin had expected a sinecure, but discovered his banking training stood him in good stead. The broad lands were mortgaged to the last *hectare*, the cattle sold as they ran. Joaquin Fiore had

plunged his entire estate into the building that was to be his monument!

"Ho!" the giant loved to say to Martin as he mounted for his daily tour of his lands. "Another day I live to cheat those thieving sons of mine of their inheritance."

But Nature triumphed at last. One morning, as Joaquin mounted, he stiffened and fell like a log. Martin ran to him. The great frame was already paralysed, but Joaquin lingered conscious long enough to whisper — in a voice that would have rivalled another's speaking tone — "Damn them! Bastards, every one!" With which he clamped his lips in a last grin.

HAMBONE

By LAZAR RISTITCH

It all started as a joke. For all of that, we don't know how it ended. Red claims he saw Hambone fall or jump in the river. Red isn't quite sure about this point. He himself was cock-eyed at the time. And you can't blame the cop for pinching Red instead of trying to save Hambone when Red staggered up to him and told him that a friend of his had fallen into the river. But we know for sure that Hambone was drunk at the time and who can tell what a guy will do when he is drunk?

Take Polak Joe for example — he got his belly ripped open by a Greek he was trying to strong-arm in an alley, and died in Receiving Hospital. Joe was a clean looking kid, blond and sleek. He looked like a young fellow just out of high school and was as quiet as a politician between elections. But once he got a shot of mastika under his belt, he would think he was Jack Dempsey himself. He would pick a fight with anybody and nine times out of ten he would knock the other guy cuckoo within a couple of minutes. That boy was some fighter. He would just bend down and dive into the guy, swinging both arms like a machine, not giving a damn where the punches landed as long as they did connect. I've only seen him lose one fight and that was when the fellow was a regular boxer and just backed away until he had Joe off his balance getting off the sidewalk. He just landed one rabbit punch on Joe's neck and Joe was down and out, flat on his mug.

There's Dutch. He isn't Dutch, he's Hungarian, but don't ask me why they call him Dutch. I don't know, and I bet he don't either. Well, when Dutch staggers in, with his cap on one corner of his square noodle, his pants half way down and his hairy belly sticking through his unbuttoned shirt, you can bet on it, he's just pretending. He can holler all he wants to and bump against the chairs and swear he's drunk, everybody knows he's only had a few shots, which he always has anyway. He's harmless then and we all kid him. But when he comes in slow-like, and sits down nice and quiet but with a mean look in his eye, then look out. He's drunk. And when that guy is drunk, he is *mean*. He's just out for trouble. So when he comes in looking that way, Blackie steps up to him and puts his hand on his shoulder friendly-like and says to him, "Come on, Dutch, give us an even break. It's Saturday, you know, and we're pretty busy. Give us a chance to make some change, will you? Come on, now! You can come back after the rush." Blackie knows his stuff, all right!

Then there's Kelly. He's about seventy, over six feet, and got bow-legs and a regular pug's mug, with cauliflower ears and a crooked nose. He's been a pug, a cowboy, a marine, and one of Soapy's gang in Alaska. He's got the hottest collection of limericks on the continent and a batch of cuss words that would make a sergeant of marines sound like a radio announcer. But when he gets

tight, he stands up in the middle of the floor and recites from a poem called "Paradise Lost." You can't make head or tail of it, but it sure sounds swell the way he rolls it out. Kelly's got a darned good voice when his whistle is well oiled.

And there's Blackie's friend, Tom. I've seen him get tight in the kitchen and all at once start bawling like a baby. I asked Blackie what the heck Tom was bawling about and Blackie told me he just remembered that his sister, who's in the old country, hasn't sent him a picture of her two kids. Can you imagine that? And Tom is nearly six feet and weighs about three hundred pounds, and he's got a big mustache like a Greek, only he isn't a Greek, but a Macedonian, like Blackie.

Yeah! It sure is funny the way people act when they are drunk.

As I said before, it all began as a joke. Blackie was just feeling pretty good that morning. When he feels that way he is always up to something. Blackie is a great guy at jokes. He will let a hayseed bum him for a "coffee and" and listen to his jungle stories pop-eyed, but on the sly he'll give the fellows in the chairs the wink. Then when the kid is through he will just laugh out loud and the whole bunch will join him. He's made many a cocky youngster feel pretty green that way.

Well, Butch comes in. Butch, you know, is a bootlegger. He has a small dump in a basement just off Woodward. An Indian woman he is living with keeps it up for him. He got started about a year ago. Heck, he said to himself, why couldn't he do what the Greeks were doing? (Hey, now, I don't mean it that way!) They get the stuff from the Italians, put some anise flavoring in it, and they have mastika and sell it at four bits the half-pint. So he started on his own hook. If he didn't drink most of his own stuff, he would be on easy street. But as it is, he has all the drinks he wants, his three squares a day, and a good suit of clothes, which he has in hock most of the time.

Well, this guy Butch comes in and orders his "half-and-half." Blackie waits on him. He pours a couple of shouperfuls of milk in a cup and fills it up with coffee and takes it over to Butch.

"Say, Butch," says Blackie to him leaning over the counter confidential-like. "Heard the news?"

"News?" says Butch. "Yeah! Hoover got elected."

"No joking," says Blackie. His face is as serious as a parson's. "Hambone is dead."

"The hell you say!" cries Butch. "Why I sold

him some mastika only the other day. He had a cold and sent Whitey over to my place to get a pint."

"Yeah, I know," says Blackie. "That's what got him started. He was fired by the Armenian the next day. But he had some dough on the side — those dancers from the Greek coffee-houses on Monroe tipped him every time business was good with them. It kept him on the drunk for a week. Well, the colored fellow who works at the morgue — he eats his breakfast here — he told me they brought Hambone in last night. Found him stiff in an alley off St. Antoine."

"Aw, quit your kidding," sneers Butch, "you can't kill an old bum like Hambone that easy."

"Honest!" says Blackie. "I ain't kidding. Saw him myself. He was a sight! His face all blown up like a bag-pipe. The Armenian heard you was the guy that gave him the stuff and got him started. He is mad like hell at you. Hambone wrecked the office before they threw him out. You know how those guys are. They lay off the stuff for a few months — Hambone hadn't had a drink in six months, ever since Stucky took him in and made a mission stiff out of him — and then they have one sniff of it and good night! They go crazy."

That's how it started. That one-eyed fellow, Jim, who works at the mission next door, hears Blackie and goes and passes the news to Stucky. Stucky, you know, had "saved" Hambone about six months before, got him right after a long drunk and made him swear off the stuff, then put him in as night clerk at the Liberty Hotel on the corner.

Well, Stucky sees his chance and prepares a swell sermon. That evening, while he is passing the bums through the works — they got to swallow a sermon before they get a chance at a bowl of soup and a flop in the basement — he gives a sermon on the late brother Charles Bass (that's Hambone's real name, you know). All about how brother Bass had slipped and fallen lower and lower to the very gutter and how he had finally found Jesus Christ and with his help had become like a new man and how he had now departed this life and had been welcomed by his Maker as the father in the parable had welcomed his prodigal son. All that sort of stuff, you know, with a lot of trimmings. If you think Stucky can't talk, you are crazy! You listen to Stucky talk about the next world and you almost wish you were dead and plinking a harp yourself. It isn't till later —

maybe not till the next day — that you wonder if it's that good up there why he don't go there himself but stays on in this lousy world. I know, because I've heard him and wondered just that way afterwards.

Now, among those present that evening was Jackie. That's not his name but we call him that because he sure likes his Jamaica Ginger. Just give him a cup of black coffee and if you turn your head away for one minute, he has his "jackie" in and sips his coffee as innocent as you like. Outside of that Jackie's a nice little fellow and don't go to the mission very often, but the cops had been after him and he had to get off his regular beat and couldn't bum anything. Well, Jackie told me all about it the next morning.

As I said, Jackie's in the mission. He is sitting in the last row. Stucky is just warming up. Jackie hears the door open and turns around and, by God, if he don't see old Hambone himself shuffle in! Hambone's still cockeyed. He takes his cap off and goes on the dark side beside the office and leans against the partition. Nobody sees him but Jackie. Jackie sits tight and watches him take in his own death sermon. From where he sits, Jackie can't see Hambone's face very well,

but he sees that Hambone is taking it all in, he is so quiet and still.

Jackie listens to Stucky and watches Hambone. He sees the sermon is working, all right. Stucky has him sniffing. By the time he gets him to the gutter, Hambone is crying. And when Stucky gets to describe the welcome of the prodigal son, Hambone quiets down and listens, and when Stucky is through he stays on for a while, thoughtful like, and then squares his shoulders of a sudden, puts his cap on and beats it before anyone else sees him.

That's what I got from Jackie the next morning. About noon, in comes Red, just turned out of the jug, and tells us about Hambone. He swears he saw Hambone jump or fall into the river, he isn't sure which. Sure, he says, he had a few shots of mastika in him, but what's a few shots to him? He could tell Hambone a mile away even if he was real drunk! He went up to a cop on Jefferson, but the cop just says, "Yeah?" and pinches him instead of trying to save Hambone.

Anyway, nobody's ever seen Hambone since. He was stewed at the time Jackie saw him, and who can tell what a drunk will do, especially after listening to Stucky?

THE BODY OF ONE

By JAMES HEARST

Glad that at last the litter and waste of winter,
Drift ends of dirty snow and the icy splinter
Of eave trough decoration, dissolve again,
I stand at the window watching the first spring
rain.

Let it come down, let it come down in torrents,
I signal the clouds, so great is my abhorrence
For the sooty lives of houses, for the unkept
Complexions of fields dulled by the months they
have slept.

Strike to the bone, let the earth again be clean
That willows and lilacs can line the air with green
And hold their color, that the least bird throat
Can point to the sun and form no tarnished note.

I would spare nothing the fresh birth of grass.
If rain by touch can make this come to pass
I will deploy my roots nor hold aloof
This body of one who is sheltered under a roof.

LOVE'S SO MANY THINGS

By CLIFFORD BRAGDON

The first four hours out of Cleveland were not bad. The bus was hot as the devil, but almost empty, and I had the whole back seat alone where I could make myself comfortable stretched out. But when we hit Youngstown, it was all over. Everybody in eastern Ohio got on there — fat women with bundles, slick boys with panama hats and several suitcases, girls in couples, and a sailor. I had to sit up to make room for a fellow and his wife.

The man looked as if he thought he were pretty hard — tight blue suit and long hair plastered back and parted in the middle — like a million others; all they seem to care about is how smooth their hair is. When he smoked, he pulled his lips tight and made the smoke spurt out of the corner of his mouth, first up and then down. They all do that, millions of them. They want you to think they are pretty hard. This one's eyes were little and grey. His wife was pretty, poor kid, though sort of pale and thin, it seemed to me.

Anyway, every chair was taken, and the heat was terrific. I began to wonder whether it was worth the twelve or fifteen I would save on it. If it had not been for the sailor and a couple of girls, I don't know how we could have stood it. As it was, everyone was glad to have them along. They sang songs and giggled and carried on almost all night. Sitting right in back of them, I got the benefit of the really good part, the hot give and take, so to speak. For instance, the sailor asked the thinnest one where they were going, and she said, "No place, friend. We're just traveling for our health." Then the other one began singing.

"I wonder how the old folks are tonight.

Do they miss the little girl who ran away?"

It was like that almost till morning. Sometimes one would sing, sometimes both — harmony — and it really wasn't bad, except once in a while. Then the sailor would groan, and they would laugh it off and get talking.

The fellow next to me — the fellow with the wife — was all ears. Every time one of them would make a wisecrack, he would haw-haw and stamp his feet. His wife would look up at him now and then and smile as if she thought it was pretty good too, and blink her eyes. But as a

matter of fact, I don't think she was even listening, because the minute she got on the bus she just curled up in a corner, coughed a few times — she had a pretty bad cough — and closed her eyes. Her husband didn't seem to mind, though. He ate three or four plums and took in the entertainment. He was sitting so that his wife could rest her head on his lap and he had to lean over on me to hear everything the sailor and the girls said.

As soon as he finished the plums, he got friendly. First he winked at me after he had nearly fallen over from laughing once, and then he leaned even closer than he was already, nudging me.

"They're rich, ain't they?" he whispered. His voice didn't sound at all the way he looked.

"Yeah," I said. "Your wife mind if I smoke?"

"No. Where you from?" he said, "Youngstown?"

I told him, no, I was from Cleveland, and he mentioned how bad the Indians were doing. Just then his wife sat up and coughed. She asked him for a cigarette, but he shook his head. Then he kissed her.

When she was curled up again, he turned to me. "It must be swell being a sailor," he said. "Lots of fun, them fellows."

"Yeah," I said, "but they don't get on land only once in so often."

"That's right," he answered, nudging me again, "but when they do, oh boy — uh?"

I moved over a little. "It's pretty good, I guess."

"You bet," he said. "You know I used to be pretty quick on the pickup myself. I used to have a pretty good line — and they fell for it, too, if I do say it."

Neither of us spoke for a while then. We were scrouging around trying to get a little less cramped and hot than we were, or else listening to the clowns in front of us. Everybody else was doing the same thing or just sitting still with their heads back and their mouths open — especially the fat women. All the women on this bus were fat — except the little girl on the back seat — and they appeared not to mind the heat as much as the thin men. They sat as if they had been dumped down

and a few yards of crumpled stuff thrown around them.

My new friend seemed to be turning something over in his mind, and so I had a chance to take a peek at his wife. I couldn't see her very well unless we were passing under a light. It gave a funny effect then, as if she were alive for a second and then dead, about to wake up and then just dropped asleep again. I was getting so I could hardly keep my eyes off her.

When we were pulling out of Pittsburgh where someone got off, leaving us three the back seat to ourselves, he started in again. "Where you bound for, Bud?" he asked me.

I told him New York and asked him where he was going.

"Harrisburg. I got an aunt," he said. "Well, we're getting off the bus at Harrisburg, that is, but we're going up to the Pocono Mountains. We been over two thousand miles on the roads in the last five days. We been out to Denver."

"Is that so?" I said. "Nice out there, they tell me."

He laughed a little. "Well," he said, "yeah, it's a nice enough place, but no work."

I asked him what he'd been doing out there then, thinking he might be one of these auto-hoboes. Neither he nor his wife looked like money at all — even cheap money. He didn't answer my question, so I said, "What did you do, drive out and then take the busses back?"

"No," he answered, "we took the busses both ways. Was you ever in Harrisburg?"

"No," I said.

It was getting late, and the entertainment was off for a while because one of the girls, the less fat one, had paired off with the sailor. The other pretended she didn't care and sang by herself for a minute but not long. She tried to get hold of a red-headed fellow across the aisle, but there was nothing doing, so she flopped around and pretended to go to sleep. I was ready for sleep myself, but didn't like to sleep sitting up, and besides, I kept glancing over at the girl curled up in the corner. I lit another cigarette and asked the girl's husband what he was going to do in Pocono.

"I don't know," he said.

"A little vacation, maybe?"

"No, I'll get work up there if I can," he said.

"One reason for going up there is maybe my uncle can get me some work. I got a trade — glass worker, but I don't care much what I do." He settled himself a little. "It don't make any differ-

ence," he went on. "There are some good farms up there — Dutch. Maybe I'd make a good farmer. Yeah, a swell farmer — not. But it's O. K. with me." He stepped carefully on the cigarette I had just tossed on the floor, and smiled.

"Well, but what's the idea going up into the hills though?" I asked him. It was about two in the morning. The time and the heat both must have made me feeble-minded. Anyway he didn't answer my question, because his wife woke up just then and put her fingers through his hair as if she liked the stuff. She was just a kid. He must have been about thirty-one or -two; hard to tell exactly. But she didn't look more than twenty at the most.

Well, for a while then he didn't even know I was alive. A big change came over him. He took out his handkerchief and fanned her like they do a fighter. It seemed funny to see this tiny little kid sitting in a corner of the back seat on a bus, all slumped down like a fighter just saved by the bell, and being fanned like one, too. It made me feel sore at something because I wanted to do something for her. Of course there wasn't anything I could do — I just felt like it ought to have been somebody else fanning her and kissing her. Not that there was anything wrong with this fellow exactly; she ought to have been married to somebody else, that's all. The poor kid must have been boiling hot — though it had cooled off a little by this time — because there were little beads of sweat all over her forehead, and she coughed so much I finally had the sense to quit smoking.

Her husband fanned her like that until she smiled at him and closed her eyes. Then she curled up again, and her husband made her as comfortable as he could. At about the same time the sailor and the girl split up. The girl came back and sat with her friend. At first the fat one pretended she was still asleep, but she soon got over that, and the two of them started in singing again. It was late, and some man up front didn't like it.

"Aw, pipe down, lady," he hollered, "and go to sleep."

The girls came right back at him. "If you don't like it, why don't you get out?" one of them said.

This got a good laugh; we were in the mountains without a house in sight. Just the same the girls quit singing.

"If he was back here, I'd slap his mouth," the fat one said.

The sailor turned around. "Well," he said, "your friend here bit mine."

"Oh, hush up, you big liar," answered the girl he had been sitting with. Then they all three laughed and started another conversation.

The fellow sitting with me laughed so hard at what the sailor said, I thought he would roll off onto the floor.

"That was a fast one," he said, rubbing his nose. "Like I said to a girl friend once." He reached in his pocket as if he wanted a cigarette, but changed his mind. He slid down in his seat so that he was talking up sideways at my chin. "This girl was in swimming, see?" he went on, grinning all over, "so I come up behind her under water and pinched her on the — well, you get me, haw, haw, haw — just kidding, see, but she made out she didn't notice it, and she says to her friend who was standing there with her, she says, 'Oh, wasn't that a big wave, Betty — or Beth, or whatever her name was.' I heard her and came right back, 'Yeah, that was swell,' I says. Swell, see, me pinching her," and he laughed hard and nudged me for the hundredth time. He was looking the way people usually do when they tell a joke — like a kid watching someone else eating a piece of candy. I thought it was a pretty bum joke, but we got talking along those lines for a while. He told a few pretty fair ones about his adventures — just the usual stuff, and then I asked him again how he happened to be going up to the mountains with the hill-billies. I preferred hearing about that though I guess it was really his wife I was interested in.

Every now and then I would look over at her, but she made me feel so foolish, I kept trying to listen to her dumb husband instead. She made me feel like I wanted to hold her like a little kid and give her a drink of water — in little sips. She would sip, I thought, and then look up and catch her breath and smile with her eyes. It made me feel foolish, thinking like that.

Well, her husband said something after a minute, answering me, I guess, but I missed it. Then I heard him say,

"I said she's pretty, ain't she?"

Of course I felt like even a bigger yap then than before; he couldn't have helped noticing me staring at her, not even him. But he didn't seem sore. I said, "Yes, but she don't look very well."

"No," he said, "she's got a cold."

He turned so that he could look at her, and patted her arm. "She's only twenty-two," he

went on. "We been married five years, would you believe it? She was seventeen then."

"Is that a fact?" I answered, not knowing what else to say.

"Yeah. She's Irish. Look at that nose and you can tell she's a little mick all right. She's only been in this country five and a half years. She come over six months before I married her."

He just seemed to be talking for talking's sake. I guess he didn't want to fall asleep, either. But I wanted him to keep on about her, so I said, "What's her name? Colleen?"

"No," he said, "Mary. She's not really Irish I guess though. She says she's Manx from the Isle of Man. Sounds like a cat, don't it? There's a cat named Manx, ain't there? Anyway I tell her she ain't got it right. She's a minx, not a Manx, I tell her."

He stopped suddenly and looked at me as if he was afraid I might think he was a sap, and yet as if he wanted me to laugh at the same time. One dirty, stubby hand was still on her arm, stroking it. It was dark, and he didn't know I could see that. But I could. Her arm was so white. It was impossible now to keep from looking at her; I was beginning to think she was the prettiest girl I had ever seen.

Pretty soon her husband started talking again. "She was working at my aunt's house when I was there for a while. They lived in Brooklyn then. That's how I come to meet her. Ever been in Brooklyn?"

"Love at first sight, uh?" I said.

He chuckled. "Hell, no," he said. "She wouldn't have a thing to do with me at first. I was carrying on around there with some other girls at the time. But, you know, I cut all that out. It's funny, ain't it, how you'll do that."

All I wanted to do was to keep on asking him questions. "How did you finally bring her around then?" I asked him.

"Oh, she come around all right in the end," he whispered, winking at me. "You can't keep the girls away from a good-looking fellow, uh?" His little grey eyes opened wide, and he nudged me. "Ain't that right?" he added, laughing when I looked at him. "Of course I was just kidding, Bud," he said. "I guess I ain't no John Barrymore, all right."

He sounded so serious I had to laugh. "Sure, I knew that," I said.

I didn't mean it the way it sounded, but I was just as glad to let it go. I was so sick of his

nudging me I could have hit him anyway. Besides, as I said, looking at his wife made me sore at things in general, and I guess I was taking it out on him. He wasn't really such a bad guy.

But he got over it all right, and pretty soon he laughed. "We was married in Brooklyn. She's a Catholic," he said.

"But how did it all happen?" I broke in on him, wanting to hear all I could. It seemed as if I had to.

"Well, I'll tell you how it was, Bud," he answered, sitting up again and crossing his legs, but keeping one hand on his wife's arm, "we got to keep awake, huh? But there ain't much to tell. There wasn't anything romantic about it or anything. I'd just been kidding around with her for a while — you know how it is — taking her to a show now and then without meaning much. She never let on one way or the other till the very end — but — but she said then she'd been crazy about me. Anyway I didn't hardly believe it myself for a long while. She was just a kid, see?"

"Oh, yeah, I see," I said.

He went right on. "She would be around the house cooking and dusting and so on and I'd just sneak up behind her and kiss her on the neck — that's about all. She was too tired for much gallivanting around most of the time usually."

I didn't like him telling me all this, and yet I kept egging him on. "Didn't she mind you kissing her like that?" I asked.

"Oh, no," he answered. "She wouldn't stand for a lot of fooling, but I wasn't never rough with her. I — I — she seemed to take it all right. Anyway we didn't court long. In fact it was just a month before I popped the question like they say. It come on me like a bolt of lightning, but Mary said afterward the only thing that surprised her was — and worried her too, she said — was why I didn't get on to myself earlier."

"Yeah, go on," I said.

"Well, one night she was out in the kitchen and I was sort of helping around when my aunt come in. 'Mary,' she says, 'Mrs. Link's out here with her baby. Come on out and take care of him while me and her go to the show, will you?' she says.

"So Mary and I went out and played with this kid for about half an hour. It was a cute kid — falling around. And then all of a sudden I felt something sort of come over me. I was the funniest feeling I ever had — like — like I wanted to pick her up and . . . Oh, well, anyway I stood

up, see? — we were sitting on the floor — and Mary looked up at me as if she was surprised — the little bum. She wasn't no more surprised — but believe me I was. I was so surprised I was afraid if I opened my mouth I'd holler and act crazy. But then the first thing I knew I heard myself talking — like I was way away.

"'Well, Kid,' I says, 'I guess you better set the date.' Right like that. 'Make it whenever you like,' I says, 'but the sooner the better.' That was all there was to it. I didn't mean to say it that way, believe me, but that's the way it was. Funny, how things happen so different from what you'd have said they would when you were thinking about it, ain't it? That was May, and we was married the following September. Mary carried roses."

I didn't say anything. I just took a quick look at his wife. Apparently the poor kid was sound asleep.

We were coming into a small town at the moment and stopped to gas up. Everybody that was awake piled out for a cup of coffee. I drank two. I was trying to think straight, but I guess I was too sleepy. The fellow and his wife both stayed in the bus.

When it came time to climb in again, I noticed it had gotten quite chilly while we were talking, so when I'd picked my way back to my seat, I told the fellow I was going to try to get a little sleep on the floor and his wife could stretch out and make herself comfortable. She was sitting up then and heard me. Neither one of them said anything, but the girl did stretch out, and he sat crunched up in one corner. I was hoping the girl would smile or something, but she didn't.

Pretty soon everybody else piled in and we started out again. The sailor and the two girls were just as full of pep as ever and began kidding around out loud. One of them said something funny, and my talkative friend let out another one of his horse laughs. I was feeling foolish still, so I took off my coat and put it over the girl's feet; she was coughing a little. Her husband already had his over her shoulders. He had the window open and I was glad it was warm on the floor. I asked him why he didn't put the window down, but he pointed to his wife, and shook his head. He was laughing so hard at the wisecrack from the seat in front he couldn't speak, but when he got through, he leaned over — I was stretched out on the floor in front of him then.

"Say, Bud, listen," he whispered, "did you ever

hear the one about the Irishman and the girl in Hoboken?"

Well, I couldn't see him, but I knew just what he looked like. Something jumped up inside me, and I said, "No, damn it, and I don't want to, either."

He didn't say anything, but I could hear him sit back and move around trying to get comfortable. I was feeling so bad I could have killed him. Pretty soon I heard a kiss and some whispering, but from where I was, I couldn't tell whether it

was in front or in back of me. That was all I knew for about three hours.

It was light when I woke up. I sat up on the floor and looked around. The girl was lying stretched out, fast asleep with her head in her husband's lap. When he saw me sit up, he winked at me, and grinned. I almost felt sorry for him — he looked so cold. I said, "How is she?"

He looked down at her and put his hand on her forehead. "Her cold's pretty bad," he whispered.

They got out at Harrisburg.

I'VE BEEN READING —

By FRANK LUTHER MOTT

I've been reading some biography.

And my latest enthusiasm is *The Caliph of Bagdad* — a new biography of O. Henry by Robert H. Davis and Arthur B. Maurice. This book is sure to be a joy, not only to those who feel toward O. Henry somewhat as they do toward members of their own family, but also to all the tribe of lovers of romance in real life.

The subtitle of the book is *Being Arabian Nights Flashes of the Life, Letters, and Work of O. Henry*, and the four parts are labeled "Aladdin," "Sinbad," "Harroun," and "Scheherezade." The experienced and therefore somewhat skittish reader may be inclined from these indications to fear one of those expressionistic biographies in which the personality of the author counts for more than that of the subject, but he will not have gone far before his fears will be laid at rest. While the style is bright and clever, and the authors have an eye for whatever is brilliant and interesting, there is also evident a genuine desire to get at the true William Sydney Porter. The book by no means supersedes Professor Smith's life of O. Henry, but it does add to our information regarding some of the phases of the famous romancer's experiences. Bob Davis and Mr. Maurice both had to do with O. Henry in their capacities as editors and what they have to say about the histories of the famous O. Henry stories is also interesting.

In short, this is that rare combination — a reliable biography and the best of entertaining summer reading. It is a brand new Appleton book and costs \$3.50.

Two newspaper biographies published within the last six or eight months have interested me greatly. One of them is Hamilton Fyfe's *Northcliffe: An Intimate Biography*, (Macmillan, \$4). The writer was one of Northcliffe's editors, and the use of the word "intimate" in the subtitle is not an exaggeration. In spite of Mr. Fyfe's evident affection for his employer, he is able to keep his balance and write frankly about the great man's shortcomings as well as about his extraordinary abilities.

Northcliffe was often called the Napoleon of the British press during the latter part of his life, and Mr. Fyfe shows us that he had a weakness for that *nom de guerre*. As the years pass, his figure does not grow less, and indeed it is impossible to doubt that he will always be regarded

as a highly significant factor in the development of British journalism.

He is particularly interesting to Americans because to us he seems about as much American as British. The Alger-like rise from humble beginnings to almost the highest pinnacle of success and power, the facts that many of his newspaper ideas came from America and that he was an admirer of this country, and the circumstances of his visits in the United States combine to increase that distinctive interest in his career.

This new Northcliffe volume supplements William E. Carson's earlier work admirably. Carson's book was published before the death of Northcliffe and thus missed some of the material which distinguishes the later chapters of Fyfe's book. Both authors had an intimate knowledge of their subject; Fyfe's style is somewhat less satisfactory because of a rather absurdly persistent use of the historical present in narrative. The book is handsomely made and is an important addition to any shelf of newspaper biography.

Mr. Miller of "The Times," by F. Fraser Bond (Scribner's, \$3), is certainly one of the best books of journalistic biography published in recent years. It discovers to us the personality of one of the greatest newspapermen of the "turn of the century" — Charles R. Miller, editor-in-chief of the *New York Times* from 1883 until his death in 1922. It sometimes seems regrettable to the student of the modern newspaper that some of the most powerful newspapermen in America are concealed throughout their entire lives by the veil of anonymity. It was such fun in Horace Greeley's time to lambast him or to worship him, and to do either by name; one could hate the elder Bennett so much more adequately as an undisguised personality than as if the object of despite were a mere printed sheet. But so far as Mr. Miller was concerned, we have had to await the publication of this volume to know of the many facets of the great editor's character. Mr. Bond traces the rise of his subject from boyhood poverty to a position of influence and wealth with simplicity and competence.

It is worth the space to point out some of the high lights of the subject matter of the volume. Miller was a rather incorrigible college boy. He could not take aca-

demic discipline seriously. After he finally obtained his sheepskin at Dartmouth from a long-suffering faculty, he spent four years at the Springfield *Republican* "school of journalism," under the second Samuel Bowles; and there he buckled down to work not only on his reportorial job but also on those background studies which were to mean so much to his later career. Coming to the New York *Times* in 1872 as assistant telegraph editor, he made rapid progress; in a little over ten years George Jones, the proprietor, made him editor of the paper. His friendship with President Cleveland, his failure in the business management of the *Times*, and his finding of Adolph S. Ochs were points of high interest in his life. Mr. Bond emphasizes his relationships with Presidents McKinley, Roosevelt, Taft, and Harding, and his appearance before the investigating committee headed by Senator Walsh. Throughout it all, Charles R. Miller the man stands out.

The idea of *If, or History Rewritten* was nothing less than a stroke of genius. It is a series of essays by highly competent writers who enjoy letting their imaginations run along lines of the possible consequences if certain historical events had taken turns quite different from their actual courses. This all sounds too complicated, but let me give some examples: Mr. Van Loon writes on "If the Dutch Had Kept Nieuw Amsterdam," and after some rather wild flights which betray the romancer more than the historian, he decides that if such a happy event had actually occurred New York would be the beatific center of American drinking and other kinds of "freedom." Milton Waldman writes a singularly effective essay on "If Booth Had Missed Lincoln," in which he shows the great emancipator harassed and worn out and practically done to death by those who opposed his liberal reconstruction policies. J. C. Squire writes a rollicking satirical essay on "If It Had Been Discovered in 1930 that Bacon Really Did Write Shakespeare." One of the most discriminating essays is that of G. K. Chesterton on "If Don John of Austria Had Married Mary Queen of Scots." There are eleven of these essays, presenting besides the essays named, Philip Guedalla on "If the Moors in Spain Had Won"; Andre Maurois on "If Louis XVI Had Had an Atom of Firmness"; Hilaire Belloc on "If Drouet's Cart Had Stuck"; H. A. L. Fisher on "If Napoleon Had Escaped to America"; Harold Nicolson on "If Byron Had Become King of Greece"; Winston S. Churchill on "If Lee Had Not Won the Battle of Gettysburg"; and Emil Ludwig on "If the Emperor Frederick Had Not Had Cancer."

For a person who has a penchant for historical speculation, this volume is fascinating and delightful. It is published by The Viking Press at three dollars.

Richard R. Smith, Inc., of New York, has published a new short story collection edited by Edward J. O'Brien called *The Twenty-Five Finest Short Stories*. Now, I admire and respect Edward J. O'Brien as much as anybody can, and think that the selection in this volume is a good one; but I submit that no human being has a right to the title employed in this anthology. I dare say indeed that Mr. O'Brien, if he were going to make up another canon of the twenty-five finest short stories next year, would give us a different list. The twenty-five best

stories for bedtime reading would be very different from the twenty-five best stories for a college class, and by the same token, the best stories for my vacation this summer would I am sure differ greatly from the best stories in this book.

Mr. O'Brien's list contains only one Russian story, and none by a German writer. I played around last winter with the idea of making up a list of the ten stories which seemed to me at that time to be the world's greatest stories for serious reading, and I am distressed to find that Mr. O'Brien's canon contains only one of those which I had on my list. That is partly because he does not include any very long short stories such as Turgeniev's "A Lear of the Steppes," Mrs. Wharton's "Ethan Frome," Galworthy's "A Stoic," or Bunin's "The Gentleman from San Francisco."

All this really has nothing to do with an evaluation of Mr. O'Brien's new anthology. It is a good and various collection and should be useful.

BIOGRAPHICAL

TED OLSON is a Wyoming journalist and writer who has been spending the past year in northern Europe. He has contributed poems to *THE MIDLAND*, *Poetry*, and other magazines, and portions of a novel of his have recently been published in *The Frontier*.

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MANNEL HAHN lives at Winnetka, Illinois. He has spent some years in South America.

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